



messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 33 – Number 1

May 2015

Special Features This Issue
At Home with the Caribou, Bears and Bald Eagles
Spirit Goes to MASCF – Damn the Drizzle Cruise
The Hildegard Reinheffer – Boat Building by Trial and Error
Revenge of the Scrap Wood Canoe



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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

Here we go into another year of publishing *MAIB*, our 33rd. I hadn't given much thought back in 1983 when we launched this periodical that I would live long enough to find myself still doing this now 683 issues along. That's a lotta issues. From May 1983 through December 2007 we turned out 24 issues a year. Starting in 2008 we cut back to 12 bigger issues yearly as a steep hike in postal rates was gonna kill us mailing 24 issues a year. Since then inflation subsided enough to keep mailing costs within reach without our having to jack up our subscription price.

Well, despite that lengthy exercise in extending my short attention span (my prior two magazines lasted only 20 years and 14 years) I have yet to weary of what I do, it's still a very enjoyable way to earn part of my living (Social Security provides the rest, now 20 years worth and counting). So on we go in the face of the onrushing digital tide that threatens to sweep print media aside. If and when it succeeds I should be, at last, outa here.

It strikes me that this situation, with still lotsa print publications circulating despite the digital onset, is a bit like how steam power took a while to ease sail power out of its job. It took about a century from around 1830 to the 1920s, and while commercial sail disappeared, recreational sail carried on and seems likely to continue so doing. Perhaps small scale print media will do likewise. Probably won't take a century but it appears to be taking longer than the digital folks predicted.

As I look around this cluttered little office (8'x14' bedroom of my childhood years) I have wondered what happened to that paperless office that computers were supposed to create. There seems to be a lotta paper still piled up here in files and on desktops. Doesn't seem that computers have gotten rid of paper yet. We have to use a computer (just one, a big screen Mac) to produce the magazine now in a format the printer can accept, and much of our communication now is by email as that is what many we are in touch with now rely on.

Anyway, *MAIB* is off on its 33rd year continuing as the plain vanilla, lotsa text, black and white printed product it has been since the beginning. Color has proliferated

in other small scale publications, even club journals, although many of the latter are now 100% digital to members. But, other than our color cover changes month to month, there will continue to be no color inside, the added cost would put us under financially. Information is what we provide, and text in black and white (as in books) does the job.

In passing I will mention that we do offer a digital version for those who desire it through an arrangement with the online magazine, Duckworks. About 100 of our present 2,000 subscribers have elected that option, many of these overseas and in Canada, as mailing print issues outside of the USA triples the cost of a subscription.

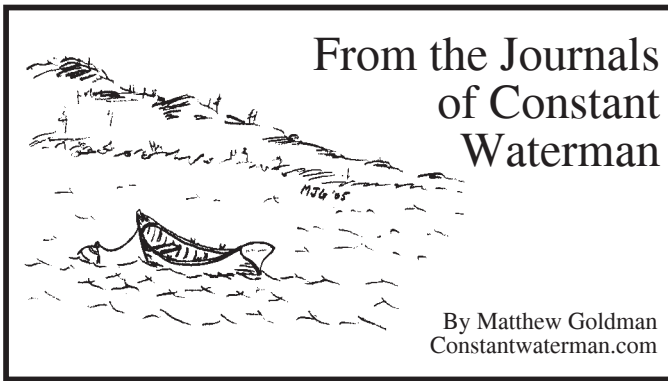
Several other obscure publications that share our "special interest" scale continue to survive in print. In our April issue we ran an article on how *Good Old Boat* was celebrating its 100th issue, along with another announcing the launching of *Marlin Spike* only a year go. *Good Old Boat* found a really useful niche, serving those who own old fiberglass sailboats, those built since the '60s that may be old but are still far too good to ignore, and their price is right. The mass media boating press pays little attention to them. *Marlin Spike* is aimed at the rather limited cohort of those who are interested in sail training and its tall ships. At issue #5 it's still too early to see how it will fare.

In our own small boat world there's the success of *Small Craft Advisor*, now past its 90th issue and closing in on #100. Devoted mainly to trailerable sailboats it offers lotsa color photos with a variety of good articles about its specialty. Like *Good Old Boat*, *Small Craft Advisor* is a bi-monthly, six times a year publication so it takes them longer for their issues to add up.

So we begin again on another year. It begins with the May issue as that was the month we launched 32 years ago. While May also happens to be the opening of the on-the-water season (hereabouts anyway) May was the time when I had disposed of my prior publication and was ready for doing something new about my newfound interest in small boats. It was timely for us as it happened. It felt good back then to get underway on our new course and still does today as our 33rd season opens.

On the Cover...

Reader Bryan Forsyth got to sail the restored 50 year old Hartge-built strip-planked centerboard sloop *Spirit* from its home at the Calvert Maritime Museum in Solomons, MD, to last fall's Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival in St Michaels, MD, arriving under sail with pennant flying as pictured. Bryan tells us about the trip on pages 18 & 19 in this issue.



From the Journals of Constant Waterman

By Matthew Goldman
Constantwaterman.com

Spring has arrived. No, the fact that my clock has been mandated to read an hour fast has little relevance. The fact that I surprised a gay young crocus attempting to vault the dead leaves by the end of the tall stone wall beside my house has little relevance. Nor has the noisy cardinal seeking a nest mate any relevance.

"What, then, has?" you query.

Why, only the necessity to begin stripping the varnish from the spars of Herreshoff boats. When the temperature creeps toward 45° and 15 knots of wind frisk down the Sound, sailboats here in southern Connecticut tend to bite at their mooring lines or climb down out of their cradles. One must remember their fond and innate predisposition for splashing about in the sea. One breezy morning, I found *MoonWind* had turned herself round in her slip to face the cove.

So, here I am, for the umpteenth time, handing down booms and clubs and oars and tillers and spinnaker poles from the racks in the loft of our shop. And scraping and sanding and generally causing a flurry of dust that congregates in my hair and behind my ears. It certainly is no more nuisance than our multitudinous maple flowers that soon will lavish my truck with yellow pollen.

There's a tangible satisfaction in the sheen of eight coats of varnish. A sense of well being, accomplishment, and a chance to brag are all inherent in every can of finish. Varnish is surely the nectar of the gods. It flows as honey flows from a heated spoon. It hardens to the clarity of ice on a limpid stream. It glows with the benevolence of the sun on a late spring morning. It dresses the plainest boat in sparkling jewels. It makes you swear you'll never buy a boat with bright work again.

I tune in the radio and listen to classical music. The announcer puts on Beethoven's Eroica symphony as I wield my keen edged scraper. Before the first movement ends, I'm down to bare wood and reveling in the shavings. I hope for some Debussy or Massenet by the time I'm ready to lay on the last of the varnish.

Refinishing portends the boating season, and the weather has become milder, week-by-week. A good thing, too. My long Johns could use a laundering after four hundred fourteen days of continuous use. And it's time to drain the lovely pink antifreeze from my plumbing and replace it with potable brew. They now demand that we recycle pink antifreeze and not pollute the sea with it or intoxicate the mackerel.

"But it's perfectly harmless," an outraged fellow boater protested to me. "You can even drink it."

Help yourself, mate. Just hang your snout by my through hull fitting while I pump out my holding tank.

I recollect a girl I dated who throve on sloe gin fizzes. Maybe those fizzes weren't concocted from sloe berries after all. Maybe they were sticky-sweet 'cause the bartender had a boat. Maybe that's why she got excited about this time of year. Then again, perhaps she was only allergic to forsythia. It's hard to get cozy with someone for whom the high point of the boating season is when we drain our coolant.

I'd venture the opinion that antifreeze is a slowly acquired taste. You need to sip it discretely; let it roll around your mouth. Its subtle, delicate aftertaste will linger on your tongue. As the evening progresses, you'll find yourself glad to designate a driver. By your fourth or fifth glass, your countenance will glow with renewed benevolence. You will have forgiven your friends their indiscretions, and welcomed your enemies into your open arms.

April could earn a reputation for intemperate antifreeze parties. But not all of us are partial to this method of recycling. If we aren't to dump our antifreeze in our previous reckless manner and, as many of us would gladly pass if offered a bright pink, presweetened Coolant Cocktail, perhaps we should change our additive altogether.

Courvoisier is another acquired taste. Not only will it prevent your pipes from freezing, but it has a distinguished lineage and a savory reputation. Just don't tell your Uncle Fromage how you plan to dispose of that case of twenty-year-old French brandy.



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The editor of another boating magazine was taken to task for, well, not doing his job, not rigorously editing every submission printed. The critic acknowledged that many pieces were well polished, usually those by regular contributors who had their own pages and likely needed no editing. But many articles could use an editor's heavy hand. The editor admitted he intentionally wasn't heavy handed and he defended his position. Many submissions were from readers of the magazine, some of whom were personal acquaintances, even good friends. He didn't want to completely overwrite and extinguish their voices, however hoarse. This generous spirit brought to mind the wise parent who doesn't take over a child's project to guarantee it wins at the science fair. Admirable as this spirit is, there's another element which both critic and editor failed to note.

Magazines run the gamut from the highly polished professional to diamond in the rough amateur laden. Travel magazines exemplify the polished end of the spectrum, in particular those travel magazines found alongside airsickness bags in seatback pockets. It's not the topic per se, e.g. travel, which denotes the professional magazine. It's the advertising. Thus the reader pays a price for high end writing. We have to wade through page after page of advertisements as we follow again and again those directions, "continued on page..." Have you noticed how page numbers aren't obvious and may even be absent on advertisement pages? To figure out where we are we have to scan those advertisements whether we like it or not. Obviously it's not the subscribers who keep such magazines afloat, except as statistics to dangle in front of an advertiser's nose. If we're seeking professional writing, regardless of topic, just grab the magazine with high end advertising and lots of it.

Amateur derives from amore, to love, and strictly speaking the amateur pursuit is one of passion not payment. (Look Ma, no advertisers!) However, along with unpaid, amateur has also come to connote unskilled



Cookbooks and Choirs

(even foolish). Well, there is something foolish about working unpaid just as there is something foolish about love as most boat owners can attest. But consider a loving spouse versus a professional courtesan. The former may be an unskilled amateur but the latter lacks a heartfelt connection. Likewise that polished professional writing often lacks the very personal connection with a subject that we get from the amateur.

Imagine the staff writer standing before an editor and getting his or her marching orders, "Go out there, see what's going on and get a story." Any passion will be in the characters portrayed, not the writer. Or picture a freelance writer leaving Barnes & Noble with every magazine pertinent to a particular field. The successful freelancer will get a feel for what editors want, figure out a formula, then go out and get some local color to flesh it out. No wonder the slick, polished, well edited magazines seem formulaic. After a while we feel like we're reading variations on a theme. The best places to vacation, retire, live, invest. How to snag the job, money, happiness, love of your dreams. There's nothing really new.

But amateurs are quirky. They write quirky (if unedited) and come up with new

and quirky stuff. Some magazines wisely collect amateur input under "tips from readers." Often that's the only thing I consistently read in those magazines. Elsewhere such tips may be buried in an article, an incidental finding but a real gem. Of special interest are the locales of amateur adventures. These won't be among those very well known "ten undiscovered places" to go hiking, camping, boating. The amateur's Shangri-la is often on home turf and will likely, thankfully, remain undiscovered. They're wonderful places to visit and with a home grown guide. The only footprint we leave is a dog eared page.

Our critic of unedited, amateur writing does not suffer alone. Many a professional musician who secures a gig as church music director must suffer similar pains at least once a week. The spirits are willing but the flesh is weak, in particular the vocal chords. Instead of polish what's displayed is passion, personal connection, religious fervor. Boat owners can certainly relate to passion, personal connection and religious fervor even if some music directors can't. The amateur knows these things, appreciates these things, writes of these things. If we want something like the Vienna Boys Choir on Sunday we'll have to make a pilgrimage at least as far as Salt Lake City and its Tabernacle. (Enroute we'll get to contemplate that travel magazine and air sickness bag and wonder why we're not on our boat's bench seat instead of trapped by armrests and tortured by a recurved backrest.) Or just go buy the CD.

It's the quirkiness and an occasional gem, not polish, which exemplifies down-home Sunday singing just as it does down-home cooking. That's why I enjoy cookbooks like *The Cotton Country Collection* by the Junior League of Monroe, Louisiana. I've tried the Cuban black beans in the *New York Times International Cookbook* by its food critic emeritus. But I always come back to the Monroe Junior League and those Key West Black Beans on page 190. There's polish and then there's palate. And no need to apologize for plainness.

Hi Rise Pontooning!





You write to us about...

Activities & Events...

CBMM Summer Boat Rentals

This summer, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum will offer a boat rental program that launches June 10 and continues Wednesdays through Sundays until August 30. Built over the years in CBMM's boatyard through the Apprentice for a Day program, the fleet of boats includes wooden kayaks and traditional rowing and sailing small craft that are perfect for one to two people. For participants wishing to sail but without basic sailing experience, the Museum will also offer private sailing lessons.

Starting June 10, hourly rental reservations can be made from 10am to 4pm with all boats returning to the museum's docks no later than 5pm. "You can take one of our boats out for as little as one hour to an entire day," said CBMM Boatyard Program Manager Jennifer Kuhn. Participants must be 16 years of age or older, with minors accompanied by an adult, unless a boater safety certificate is presented. All participants must be physically able to get in and out of a small boat without assistance. Life jackets will be provided.

Sign ups and payment will be taken at the museum's welcome center with walk ins welcome. Boats will be launched from the museum's floating docks, located near the Steamboat Building along the Fogg's Cove side of campus. Participation is limited by the number of boats available, with pre reservations also recommended.

For more information about the boat rental program or sailing lessons, contact Allison Speight at aspeight@cbmm.org or 410-745-4941. In the event of small craft warnings or inclement weather, the programs will be cancelled.



Classic Boat Show

Bring your kids and grandchildren to the Michigan Maritime Museum Classic Boat Show and Small Craft Festival in South Haven, Michigan, on June 20. There will be the traditional toy boat building activities plus scheduled readings of maritime children's books and an opportunity to draw

with the maritime illustrator of the recently published book on *Bernida*, two time winner of the Mackinac Race. In addition to a tugboat model, kids will have a chance to select from two other models, a balloon boat and a crayon boat.

Demonstrations on boat building are in the mix of things to watch, including marquetry, steam bending and other maritime skills. Come see small craft constructed with wood, composite materials, fiberglass and metal. Docksides tours of the Museum's on the water passenger carrying vessels, *Friends Good Will*, the *Lindy Lou* and *Bernida* are planned as well as the opportunity to go inside the *Evelyn S* fish tug, now under restoration through a grant from the Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program, DEQ.

More information about the Museum can be found at www.MichiganMaritimeMuseum.org.



Projects...

My Latest Toy

Here is a photo of my latest sailboat, *Toy*, on its maiden sail in Mill Valley (California) harbor. *Toy* is an improved *Sleeper*, with a sit up cabin. I built it in 111 hours, not counting the wheel system. My last, *Mini*, took 186.5 hours. I try to operate on the KISS principle to simplify and speed construction (Keep It Square Skippy). This new vessel is presently using *Mini*'s sail but I'll soon sew a new one for the new boat.

I've been meaning to mention the Guideboat Company which set up in a former lumberyard down the street from me over a year ago. My first impression of rowboats priced at thousands of dollars seemed to exclude most of the people I know as potential customers. However, knowing the real cost of building a boat brings this into perspective. A \$4,850 Guideboat is really very fairly priced. Derek Van Loan, Mill Valley, CA



This Magazine...

Keeping the Torch Lit

What a great surprise in the February issue to find "Beyond the Horizon" again. At first I thought it was an old article until I noted the author, "Doc" Regan. The attempt to keep the torch lit is commendable and he does a fine job. Please keep it alive and I'm sure Hugh would be happy to know his legacy continues.

Theodore Griffiths, Manasquan, NJ

Power and Influence

After reading Ann Westlund's review of *Flowers of the Sea* by Eric Schoonover on March 18, I ordered a copy from Amazon, they had 12 in stock. The book arrived two days later on March 20. I read this fascinating book over the weekend. Out of curiosity, I checked back with Amazon on the March 23 and found no copies in stock and the book on backorder. Such is the power and influence of *MAIB*. It is an unusual story, well told and lived up to the expectations created by the reviewer.

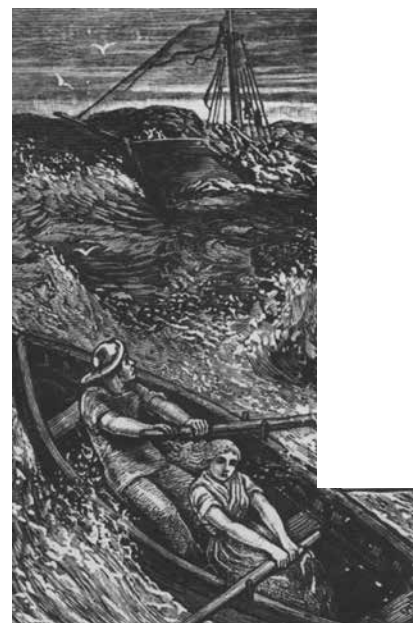
Sam Stevenson, Niceville, FL

Poetry Corner...

Deck Shoes

Deck shoes mark time's passage
as surely as a dog
ten to fifteen years
for each
they become attached
and old friends
patched and repaired
as Samuel Johnson advised
until one day you realize
you will only need
one or two more pairs.

George Haecker, Omaha, NE



Location

Lake Pend Oreille, Idaho, and Pend Oreille River. A six day circumnavigation of Idaho's largest lake. Each day's anticipated travel averages 20 miles by rhumb line with allowance for weather, individual boats' characteristics and whims of the moment.

Dates

We will meet up at 0800, Sunday, 20 September 2015, at AJ's Café in Priest River, Idaho. We will launch just down the road from AJ's at the public ramp and store our tow vehicles at a location in town.

Contact

Dan Rogers, DanAshore@conceptcable.com

Launch Ramp and Parking

Use of the ramp is free and parking will be arranged and fees announced closer to the event.



This particular ramp stays open through the winter for duck hunters and other stalwarts. You need to use a 4wd tow rig and bring your own sand when it's freezing out, but that's not a problem in September. Here are a couple of photos from a year or so ago when I was trying out one of my frankenbot creations in February at the Priest River ramp.

September Surprise

By Dan Rogers



Schedule and Activities

The "main event" will certainly be a day's sailing each day for a week. Every night is planned to be spent pier-side in a marina setting. At least two of these nights will also include restaurant availability and more are possible if the route is modified. There are two possible overnight anchorages, depending upon weather and group desires.

Food and Shelter

This is an event organized for boats and crews capable of transiting a minimum of 20 miles per day by sail and/or motor. Further, this location can be subject to unsettled

weather so boats and crew must be capable of making open water crossings similar to that experienced by vessels making the crossing from Port Townsend to Victoria, for example. Each vessel must be capable of sustaining the crew for meals and sleeping accommodation either pier-side or at anchor. However, we will have group meals when ever possible in the evenings.

Local Knowledge

The biggest unknown (surprise) is the expected weather. The boats and crews participating in the September 2014 Movable Messabout in similar locations experienced temperatures below freezing and well above 70°, all in the space of a few days. We had significant wind and dead calm. One of the best parts of an outing in this part of the country in September is the almost total absence of other people and boats. The jet skis and wake boarders are long gone. About the only traffic will be from diehard fishermen.

RSVP

Please contact me by email if you think you'd like to attend. I'll make sure to write back with any particulars and last minute changes.

Background Note

This past year, I led an outing in northern Idaho and eastern Washington. I went to rather great lengths to ensure options and alternatives for all the participants. Basically, after explaining all the things planned and available, the group would nod and say, "OK. We'll follow you." So this year, just figure I'll have things worked out and I'll have you back to your trailer on schedule. For the rest of it, just let me surprise you. OK?

Hope to see you!

Views Along the River



Elf Classic Yacht Race



The historic 1888 racing yacht *Elf* as seen during last September's National Sailing Hall of Fame Classic & Traditional Race in Annapolis when *Elf* spanked the fleet and took top honors—*Photo Russell Levi*

Launching early from Annapolis' Eastport Yacht Club and ending at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St Michaels, the 5th annual Elf Classic Yacht Race brings the centuries old tradition of yacht racing back to the Chesapeake Bay on May 16. Proceeds from the race benefit the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild and CBMM, where race participants will be greeted and the winners announced later in the day.

The race is organized by CYRG and features America's oldest active racing yacht, the 1888 *Elf*. Restored by the CYRG to historically accurate condition and relaunched in 2008, the *Elf* is a Lawley built 30' class cutter that pioneered offshore yacht cruising in 1893 by being the first small craft to cruise round trip from Marblehead, Massachusetts, to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

For the May 16 race, a fleet of classic yachts will join *Elf* in an 1880s style race. Featuring a nautical "Le Mans start," the race begins with each yacht's captain first rowing a tender to his vessel before raising anchor and setting sail across the Chesapeake Bay.



The 1888 *Elf* as seen in last year's Elf Classic Yacht Race—*Photo Dan Phelps/SpinSheet*

"These boats are something to see all on their own," commented CYRG President Rick Carrion. "So you can imagine how spectacular it is to see so many rare boats coming together for this race."

The race begins at 9am at the Eastport Yacht Club where spectators can bid farewell to the racing fleet. On the water, the race can be seen across the Chesapeake Bay from Annapolis and into the Eastern Bay. The race concludes at St Michaels harbor on the Miles River at CBMM, where museum guests and onlookers will greet the fleet as it arrives along the museum's waterfront. The race ends when the captains have anchored off, rowed to shore and signed the race log at the museum's historic Tolchester Beach Bandstand.

To see a video of last year's race, go to www.bit.ly/ElfClassic. To register a yacht for the race, download a complete registration package under the "Events" tab at www.cyrg.org, or contact CYRG's Rick Carrion at elf1888@earthlink.net. Early registration is recommended with wooden, classic and traditional yachts given preference when participating vessel limits are reached.

CYRG is a member organization dedicated to the preservation of maritime heritage through the maintenance and operation of the *Elf*. She was designed by George Lawley & Son of South Boston, Massachusetts, and built in 1888 for William H. Wilkinson. Over the warmer months, she can be seen dockside at CBMM and out along the Miles River and Chesapeake Bay.

New this year will be a special award for the winning boat, with Fordham Brewing generously donating the winning captain's weight in beer. "We're very excited to be partnering with Fordham for the race," said Carrion. "They are great supporters of CBMM, and now our captains have one more reason to win."



This year, in addition to receiving bragging rights and an award plaque, the *Elf* Classic Yacht Race's winning captain will receive his or her weight in beer, which is being generously donated by Fordham Brewing of Dover, Delaware. Fordham and Dominion Brewing's Vice President of Sales Casey Hollingsworth, left, and Classic Yacht Restoration Guild President Rick Carrion, right, recently met at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum to go over promotional plans for this year's Elf Classic Yacht Race.

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Small Craft Advisory

A Book About the Building of a Boat

By Louis D. Rubin, Jr.
Atlantic Monthly Press, New York: 1991
(Paperback edition 1994)

Reviewed by John Nystrom

Those of us who mess about in boats have our own “great authors,” folks we like to read because they are one of us and they understand, they get it. The rest of the universe may not rate them as “important persons of letters” but we love them nonetheless. Now there are critically acclaimed writers who have written of the sea, but most of them just don’t seem to be messabouts, though some did appreciate small boats or small craft adventures. There are those, however, who we could see showing up at the local messabout. And we and they would all have fun. Louis D. Rubin, Jr was definitely in that category.

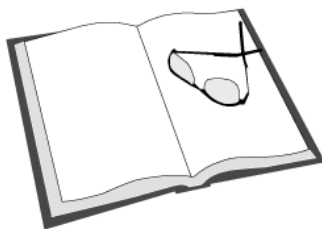
To steal the blurb off the cover flap of *Small Craft Advisory*, “Louis D. Rubin, Jr, is the author and editor of some 40 books, the founder of the creative writing program at Hollins College, Virginia, and the University Distinguished Professor of English, emeritus, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has recently retired as publisher of Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, which he founded in 1982.”

If the title and a quick glance at the contents weren’t enough to get me to grab this one up at the used book store, the back cover would have got me (and did), since it had an endorsement by one of my favorite non nautical authors, Annie Dillard (a graduate of Rubin’s program at Hollins College and winner of a Pulitzer Prize). “*Small Craft Advisory* is the wonderful story of Louis Rubin’s many and varied small craft, his sailboats and motorboats and the water about Virginia and the Carolinas that they ply. This is a moving account by a happy man.”

The book is about the building of Rubin’s last boat, *Algonquin*, named for not just the publishing house Rubin founded (famous for discovering unknown southern authors), but also for the coastal passenger liner that had brought his father home from a business trip in the 1930s. *Algonquin* was both Rubin’s last boat and his first new boat, as opposed to “previously owned.” But the story starts with the leaky tub Rubin and a friend built in childhood Charleston, South Carolina, and goes on to stories of a lifetime’s worth of subsequent boats and waters enjoyed.

Rubin manages to find the life and humor in a series of missteps known to every boater and boat owner. In the end, as usual, the family manager has the last say, “For once in your life, my wife had said, get a boat that works, a new boat that won’t break down every time you use it.” There was and is, of course, no such watercraft in existence, new or old, it is the nature of marine engines to break down and beyond doubt the time would come when *Algonquin*’s rebuilt 82hp Mazda diesel would get its licks in, too.

Rubin’s new boat isn’t off the show-room floor, but is built for him out of wood on workboat lines with workboat finish, on the Carolina coast. The story, however, is constructed of dreams and imagination, but I



Book Reviews

won’t spoil that story further. I’m writing this as the last of the winter storms is blocking my driveway, but I’m dreaming, imagining, and planning the thaw and a new boat and messing about to come. “The fact is that at no time of the year, winter, spring, summer, or fall, is the imagination not a vital part of boating.” *Small Craft Advisory* is still available in paperback, and used hardback, to fuel your imagination.

The British Raid on Essex The Forgotten Battle of the War of 1812

By Jerry Roberts
Garnet Books, Wesleyan
University Press, 2014

Part of the Driftless Connecticut Series
(197 pages with extensive modern and
period maps, paintings and photos)

Reviewed by Boyd Mefferd

Postage stamps can be a big deal for people like me who still write letters and send out paper checks. My recollections of the War of 1812 were recently refreshed with a series of four stamps that honored the *USS Constitution*, Fort Mchenry of National Anthem fame and the battles of Lake Erie and New Orleans. The war with England was more or less a draw, but it produced more than enough heroes, including Andrew Jackson who rode his fame all the way to the White House and onto the \$20 bill. No Americans are remembered, however, for the “battle” that took place in Essex, Connecticut, the morning of April 18, 1814.

The little town of Essex and its Connecticut River Museum have been the hosts for our Southern New England Chapter, Antique & Classic Boat Society Boat Show for the last 20 years. I love visiting there and thought I understood its history of ship building and maritime commerce, but until last summer I had no knowledge of its dubious distinction from the War of 1812.

The boat show follows pretty much the same routine every year. I try to arrive early Friday to get a spot on the inside docks, protected from trouble that might be caused by the occasional skipper who doesn’t understand the concept of “no wake” or thinks that laws do not apply to him. Saturday morning is the judging and by early afternoon the awards are set and the trophies made. Then there’s always a slow period of several hours before the bar opens and boats are supposed

to remain at the docks for public viewing so a trip on the river is not an option. Several years ago I was invited to pass the time at a talk on boat bottoms, but last summer I got lucky and was treated to Jerry Roberts, the former Museum Director, who lectures on the “battle” of Essex.

Given the warm July day and the air conditioning running in the museum, I was surprised that more people did not file in for Jerry’s talk, but those of us who did were treated to an exciting story, illustrated with slides of maps and paintings. Several times he let us know that he was giving us just enough detail to whet our appetites, but not spoil us for his book, which was available in the Museum shop. I lined up afterwards to buy a copy, but didn’t get around to reading it until the snow was flying. Jerry was correct in claiming that knowing the basic story didn’t ruin the excitement of the book, so I’m taking the same risk with my review.

During the War of 1812 the British fleet was offshore of New England and played hide and seek with Americans under the command of Commodore Stephen Decatur with no decisive battle one way or the other. New England merchants traded heavily with England and their Federalist Party had opposed the war, which was promoted by Republicans Madison and Jefferson who wanted to break the British alliance with Indians in Ohio and Michigan and maybe even drive them out of Canada. Shortly after the end of the war the British did leave Ohio and westward expansion increased dramatically, but as we know, Canada was another story. When it was all said and done there were no big winners and the real losers were the Indian tribes.

Essex, then known as Pettipaug, was a major shipbuilding town with several active yards and would have been an attractive target for the British fleet, except that the bar at the mouth of the Connecticut River limited traffic to ships of 8’ foot draft or less. This created what turned out to be a false sense of security for Essex. Full rigged ships of up to 400 tons were built, but run out of the river with good local knowledge and only on the spring flood or a moon tide. Yards in Essex built mainly ships destined to work as privateers to prey on British merchantmen. Given the right kind of daring and luck, this could be extremely profitable for owners, captains and crew. The British couldn’t be everywhere at once and a good privateer was a fast sailer who could slip away when sighted by a man ‘o war. One British solution was the time honored idea of attacking the nest at night, and that is exactly what they did in mid April 1814.


The British assembled a force of about 100 seamen and officers plus 40 Royal Marines who were the special forces of their day, spread among six small boats and, after sunset, rowed their way the six miles from the mouth of the river up to Essex. A local traitor who was never definitively identified, but was paid a handsome “pension,” was their guide. Once there the mission was to burn all the ships as quickly as possible and get back to their fleet before an American force could assemble and stop them.

The logical spot to set up cannons and protect the Connecticut River was high ground at Saybrook Point, but reminiscent of our issues today, a dispute between the Federal Government and the State of Connecticut had left that vantage point completely abandoned and the river entirely unguarded.

With the spring flood well underway, rowing was slow but the British arrived in Essex around midnight and were confronted by a group of townspeople. The British commander, Captain Richard Coote, explained his mission as the destruction of ships only and promised that if he was offered no resistance he would leave the town and its people untouched. In the perfect antithesis of American Captain James Lawrence's famous (also from the War of 1812) order of "Don't Give Up the Ship," the people of Essex realized that they stood no chance and agreed to give up all the ships. A total of 27 were destroyed, most in the river and some still under construction. This torching took most of the rest of the darkness and word of the raid began to spread around the countryside. By first light groups of defenders had assembled, but the British stayed well out in the river, just out of gunshot.

A favorite joke for an auto mechanic friend was his answer when someone asked if their car is capable of making it to its destination. "Sure," he'd reply, "but how do you plan to get home?" The British faced the same question, six miles into enemy territory in small boats. Their answer was to wait the whole day and only start back down the river well after dark on a moonless night. They took a couple casualties but the bulk of the force returned as heroes. The same could not be said for the Americans, who suffered the largest naval loss of the war.


Essex was left with a crushed economy and an event that was better forgotten than commemorated. Still, every year in May they celebrate what is popularly called "Loser's Day" with a parade. When he came to town to take the job at the Museum, Jerry Roberts



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decided he'd try to learn more about the event,


And learn he did, complete with archeology and extensive research in 200 year old British Navy records safely kept in London. All is discussed and revealed in his book, which reads like a thriller even when I already knew the ending. For scholarly pursuits there is an extensive appendix and bibliography. The book is valuable at several levels, but primarily it is just a good story, well told.



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"We are on vacation now," said Mario, the head guide of the Kongakut River, Alaska, canoeing/rafting expedition. "Let's hope everyone has a good time and is happy. The second consideration is safety. And we are on river time."

Our party of ten would be battling the whitewater river for 11 days to navigate 55 miles downstream, with take out a few miles above the Arctic Ocean. In reaching the put in, two bush pilots had landed their planes on an improvised gravel bar landing strip on the upper reaches of the Kongakut. Red flagging on either side of the strip was fluttering in the wind. Alaskan bush pilots generally travel in pairs for safety in case one might break down and be stranded in the middle of nowhere. They aided us in unloading our gear.



Push the right button! The cluttered instrument panel of a bush plane is designed to cover any necessity for safe flying, short of landing on the moon.



"Gold is where you find it," decrees an old adage. As seen from the air, just north of Fairbanks, active gold mines operate with prefab buildings, dumps and access roads.



On the flight into the Brooks Range, the Yukon River sprawls below any which way it pleases, living up to the original Indian word "Yukon," which translates into English as "Big River." If any canoeist or boatman might miss the main channel by mistake and end up following a deadend slough, he might wander around aimlessly for days.

At Home with the Caribou, Bears and Bald Eagles Canoeing Alaska's Kongakut River

By Richard E. Winslow III

In Memory of Gerald L. "Jerry" Golins, Director of the Colorado Outward Bound School (COBS), Marble, Colorado. (The author completed a practicum at COBS in 1976). "Either you are on the bus," Jerry said, "or off the bus, but please just don't stand in the way and block the door."



Leave nothing to chance. Bush pilots must be, by necessity, first rate mechanics to maintain their planes in tiptop working condition.

We were all wearing goose down or woolen jackets to ward off the chilly nip in the air. The Brooks Range in mid June 2014 was still emerging from late winter with shelf ice along the river banks. The ptarmigan birds we saw still wore their winter white plumage before their changeover to brownish summer camouflage to confuse potential predators.

"Why are you here?" Mario asked me in a friendly way. "What do you expect to get out of the trip?"

I did not have a prepared answer, and for the moment I did not know how to respond. My reason was obvious. "I am here," I said, "because I love the Brooks Range. I enjoy the rivers, the fresh air, the snow on the mountains, the chance encounters with wildlife, the people on the trip, just the pure exuberance of being here."

I was on my fourth trip to the Brooks Range in northernmost Alaska. Nature has been engaged in a violent endless struggle, whereby the mountains have battled erosion for millions of years. Snow, water and wind patiently tear down twisted rock ridges to form crenellated and fluted gullies. Avalanches and rockslides accelerate the process. From these pinnacles, walls and cirques, creeks soon evolve as rivers.

The Kongakut River begins as a mere trickle from the meltdown of a glacier high in the Davidson Mountains, a subdivision of the Brooks Range. The name "Kongakut" is, in fact, derived from an Inuit reference to the river, roughly translated as "deer pond." This Inuit blunt, descriptive name invariably rings true as the caribou, a member of the deer family, swim across the river on their annual migrations.

Historian that I am, I could not resist the temptation to find out the origin of the name

pertaining to the individual for whom these mountains so honored. For once the name was well deserved as English born George Davidson (1825-1911) was an American geographer who had explored Alaska in 1867 on assignment to the United States government. His onsite job was to advise the leaders in Washington relative to Alaska's resources prior to its purchase from Russia. His favorable reports helped convince the various Congressional committees of the feasibility of purchasing the Great Land.

Almost 150 years later our party began its journey in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) which includes the Davidson Mountains. The ANWR was established in 1960 to supervise over 19 million acres and is currently embroiled in a bad guys vs good guys donnybrook between the oil lobbyists and the environmentalists. This dispute has not degenerated into a pitched battle yet, but one never knows.

I am not a militant, a protester, engaged in writing letters to my Congressman, one who attends rallies, or donates money for the cause, but rather just a simple minded person who loves the wilderness. I would just say that such a proposed massive petroleum development here would wreck the place with oil wells, haul roads, airstrips and pipelines. For me, the well known French economic term "laissez faire," translated as "let alone," sums up what I think of the whole controversy in two words. Laissez faire forever!

But forget for the time being the incessant wrangling over the fate of this beautiful land. My thoughts drift back to our group meeting the night before at Pike's Waterfront Lodge in Fairbanks with maps, checklists and an animated discussion to organize the expedition. We all gave our hearts to this undertaking.

Mario, the head guide, looked the part with a full black beard and a football player physique. Almost as if he were a character out of a Jack London Klondike story, Mario had biked to Alaska and ended his journey in Skagway. After leading day hikes for the cruise lines in the nearby Sawtooth Range, he began guiding at Lake Clark. During the winters, he was a ski patrol ranger at Stevens Pass in Washington State. At 37 years old, he had already gone down the Kongakut River four times. When he happened to mention that his grandmother was originally from Venice, Italy, I remarked in jest, "Your ancestors must have been gondoliers and you have inherited their paddling skills."

Joselyn, the second guide, was a native of Connecticut and had just completed her freshman year at Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage with a major in outdoor education and hospitality. Even back in Anchorage she was not idle. "I work for the Admissions Office and take prospective students and their parents on walking tours around the campus."

Her embrace of the outdoor lifestyle extended far beyond the Anchorage city limits. "I went on a 22 day, 475 mile canoeing trip with my classmates on the Yukon River from Eagle to the Dalton Highway haul road bridge," she said. "And in preparation for this trip and summer job, I completed a three day backpacking trip in the Chugach Mountains." A prime athlete, she was a most helpful person. "I want to make everyone happy," she said.

Matt was 29 years old and a US Coast

Guard Academy graduate with seven years of active duty. "I am training to be a guide," he said, "and I shall study for my Master's degree in chemistry in order to teach during the winters." We all looked upon Matt, for all intents and purposes, as the third guide, an individual driven with a quickness and precision in everything he did.

The seven guests were already well traveled in the rafting/canoeing/kayaking world. They had been everywhere, some being veterans of the standard top trips in the Lower Forty Eight, Colorado River's Grand Canyon and Idaho's Middle Fork of the Salmon, also called the "River of No Return." With their skills and experience, they most certainly did return.

Jacek was in his early 70s and had already experienced an incredible life. Born in Poland during the Nazi occupation, he had endured both the Communist and Cold War eras before migrating to the United States.

How bizarre it seemed to me, the more I thought about it, as a US Army infantryman, I was on one side of the Iron Curtain in the late 1950s with my M-1 rifle on field maneuvers in what was then known as West Germany. Just a few years later, Jacek was fully armed with his weapons a few miles across the border as a soldier in the Communist bloc Warsaw Pact army. And we both had orders to shoot "if the balloon goes up," as the US Army expression at the time phrased it. But luckily the Cold War never became hot. To be sure, Jacek actually had another option which he did not pursue. "In Poland," he said, "one was either drafted into the army or, if someone insisted he was a consciousness objector, he could work in the coal mines for three years."

Two brothers were also in our party. Earl was a Columbia University graduate and had just retired as an ecology professor of the University of Michigan/Ann Arbor. On a field trip to Australia he had survived a terrible wind and wave storm as he crossed a natural channel between two islands of the Great Barrier Reef in his canoe. Back home, he backpacked the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness area of Montana/Idaho. "We did not encounter anyone," he said, "for a whole week, except a trail crew."

Being a historian, I could not resist casually asking him if he might have any stories about fly fisherman Dwight D. Eisenhower, one time president of Columbia University. "Yes," he replied, "he is remembered as the person who constructed the crosswalks on campus." I speculated that Ike, having gone above and beyond his academic service, had perhaps performed one of the most useful humanitarian contributions possible to Columbia, his crosswalk, thus saving people from injuries incurred by slipping on mud or wet grass during and after rainstorms.

Earl's brother, Marty, had been an ecology engineer with the Bonneville Power Administration, Ross Complex, in Washington State. Marty and his wife Nancy loved kayaking and recommended that I go to Vancouver Island, Canada, for a paddle at the Broken Group Islands, a unit of the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. Residents of the Olympia Peninsula in the Evergreen State, they often headed for Tanzania, Africa, as volunteers to teach at a rural village.

Walt and Alicia hailed from Austin, Texas, and spent much leisure time at the Great Bend National Park and the Rio Grande. Walt was a retired businessman

while Alicia was an executive with a credit union organization. Both were avid birders and traveled throughout the desert Southwest to observe various species.

As for myself, I am a writer who has lived for these wilderness trips, something totally different from sitting at a desk, holding a pen, or manipulating a computer/microfilm reader/printer to research and write my books. Too much of that business gives me a stiff neck and a worn out mind. Not only the outdoors itself grasps my zeal for these trips, but also I look forward to meeting and being with the fascinating people I invariably encounter on these expeditions. "I want to find out," I say to myself. My imagination soars when talking with the people I meet, about their lives, plans and ambitions.

After our entire party had arrived and pitched tents for a night's sleep, we all assembled the next morning at river's edge. There, five hefty blue bags housed the SOAR (the acronym for "Somewhere On A River") inflatable canoes. The expedition company, SOAR Inflatables, Inc, founded in 1993, was located at Healdsburg, California, on the Russian River in the heart of the Sonoma wine country. We were using the Explorer model, a light blue 18' craft, which weighed 78lbs and was capable of carrying 1000lbs. The material was rugged hypalon and neoprene.



Once unfolded and stretched out, the canoe was ready to be inflated. Mario attached a pump to three separate valves, one following the other, as he lifted his foot to press up and down for air. Gradually the craft puffed up to a cigar shaped rigid form.

Just as a potential car buyer often kicks the tires for good luck, I pushed down with my hands on the solid hard surface. The two person craft was a New Age water vehicle. "It has a self baling floor," Mario explained.

The canoes moreover served a dual purpose. Once in camp we upended three of them on their sides at right angles, with the fourth side free to serve as an entrance. We then roped down a red plastic tarp over the canoe walls for a roof. This canopy provided a dry, protected cooking and dining area.

I was happy Mario had selected me as his canoe partner. I would be the bowman while Mario would steer the canoe from his stern seat. The center afforded a tight fit squeeze for the "bear barrel," which sealed all the food inside, leaving no odor. Without such a barrel, the bears otherwise would smell and tear into any loosely packaged food, toothpaste, candy or anything else they might crave. Bear barrels, either large or small, are required by law in some National Parks in the interests of safety. The rest of the space in our boats allowed room for packs, bags and canteens to be jammed, strapped or roped in for security. Once fully loaded, the canoe would ultimately be tested for balance and tracking on trial runs on the river.

With the five boats ready for launching, Mario conducted a dry land class on canoe safety, with many of the strokes and commands virtually identical to that of rafting and kayaking. Almost as if we were in an exercise workout, everyone waved his paddle back and forth in the air.

After a group hike on the tundra slopes (I dropped out early) I returned to my tent and sleeping bag for a nap. After Joselyn walked by to call me to supper, I strolled down to the camp kitchen. Mario was frying northern pike steaks, as two of our party had caught the fish in the late afternoon. I savored both the steak, and life itself, in these awesome river and mountain surroundings.



Book your reservations early! Home for the night is in the luxurious Kongakut Hilton suite, equipped with free air conditioning. No detail escapes Mario as he supervises the pitching of a tent.

The next morning we were ready to go. I gave my last glance at the ripsaw mountain ridge in back of our camp and counted, one by one, 41 distinct pinnacles. Below in the gullies isolated snow patches were being slowly melted away by the 24 hour a day sun. There they were, moving objects, as my eyes could distinguish between snow patches and Dall sheep on the steep slope crossing from one talus slide to the other.

After carrying all my gear down to the canoes at riverbank, I returned to my tent site for a final look for lost equipment check. The matted down grass would rise in an hour or so, leaving no trace that a tent had ever been pitched there, save for a few rocks. I glanced at the stones we had placed in a circle around the tent site, one for a missing metal stake and others to weigh down the tent walls and flaps to counter the wind.



Northward ho! With the Kongakut River fastwater rushing toward the Arctic Ocean, our party anticipates a 55 mile jackrabbit ride to the delta in five SOAR canoes.



What is on the other side? Answer, no oil wells yet. The Brooks Range mountains extend endlessly to the horizon in all directions within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) where bears, eagles and the caribou currently live in peace.

I suddenly realized that I had viewed this same exact scene on my previous Arctic trips. "This reminds me," I said to myself, "of the Inuit tent rings I saw on my Northwest Territories canoeing trip some years ago." On their caribou hunts, the Inuit had anchored down their caribou skin hide tents with boulders. Once they broke camp, the rings preserved the site as the skins eventually rotted away. I felt a haunting spiritual kinship to these long departed ghosts.

On the earlier NWT expedition the head guide had been very concerned about preserving and respecting the historical/archeological record. After our party had arrived at an especially remote site at the end of a long paddling day, the guide had instructed, "Leave the Inuit rings alone, do not disturb them and find your own rocks."

My tentmate and I left the Inuit site intact and then scoured the landscape for loose rocks in honoring their memory. After considerable time, and at quite a distance from our newly created tent site away from the Inuit rings, we managed to haul back a sufficient number. "It's hard to find rocks close by," my tentmate said. "The Inuit took them all."

My inspection over, I soon approached the canoe, conveniently swung around by Mario so that I could easily step in and be seated. We pushed off into the light olive green water racing by with its forward momentum, soon to be rippling into white-water. "We want to avoid the ice along the banks," Mario cautioned. "Stay clear or you will risk being hit by calving ice. We'll follow the deep water as it sweeps around high banks and then curls back toward the center."

Except for Mario, and probably Joselyn, we were all experiencing "first day itis" with our paddling muscles and skills rusty after the long winter. But it felt good to be getting back into shape.

Mario had his own concerns. Head guides in the lead boat should have been born with four eyes. Two already in place and focused on the river ahead and two mounted in the back of the head to observe the rest of the party and any problems which might arise. After a particularly difficult stretch, Mario would eddy out and await the others. He would not leave until the last boat was in sight.

We were primed to be on the alert every moment. Ice sheet tongues from the high banks flared out from the main bloc, being undercut by flowing water. Massive chunks

had already toppled loose from the main ice sheet and had tumbled down into the river with a splash. Some plates leaned back flush against the bank.



Keep your distance or be sorry. Ice sheets and floating bergs are the bane of a canoeist's existence. Calving may crash down at any moment with ice either hitting the canoes or creating waves to swamp them.

I noticed striations in the layers of ice, violet bands recording its count of successive snowstorms. The purple artwork of nature was beautiful, almost tempting us to approach more closely to view it. Only a fool would ever do that. We strove to avoid, at all costs, swinging too close and risk being hit with sudden calving.

In the North they call it "the breakup," referring to the rotten ice splitting apart with an audible cracking noise once spring arrives. An unexpected breakup of the remaining ice here could have easily destroyed a canoe. If not directly hit, the boats would be plummeted by huge waves fanning out from the crash, thus threatening to capsize us.

"Rock," Mario yelled time and again, pointing the blade of his paddle toward the obstacle as we approached a boulder. "Big rock," I would chime in to bellow a warning to those in the rear. We either adjusted our paddle stroke to sweep around the rock or, if we judged the water deep enough, to ride over these sleepers with inches to spare. Sometimes we did not make it and grounded in shallow water.

Walt and Alicia were experiencing difficulty and frequently brushed by or glanced off of cliff faces. "Back paddle, back paddle," Mario yelled. They dumped. I did not see the exact sequence of events before the accident, capsizing usually takes but a split

second. Walt and Alicia were thrown out of their canoe. They were rescued immediately and without injury.

Our party at once took out on a long gravel bar, most conveniently at hand, and attended to the two wet individuals. They were wearing waders, the boots attached to long pants, leaving the inner layers basically dry. "We'll get a fire started," Matt exclaimed. Despite damp wood, a fire soon warmed them. A quick change of inner clothing further reduced any chill they might have. Mario shook off the water from the waders and rubbed the surface dry with a towel. It was lunchtime and we all ate heartily. Walt and Alicia quickly joined us in dry clothes, poised to resume the battle against the river. Finally, we swung out into the whitewater once again.



Not exactly walking on the sand at Waikiki Beach. Drying out after a dump.

During the infrequent mellowing of the mad river, we approached a high cliff on river right. I spotted something white on top. It was not snow, perhaps a manmade object I initially thought. "It's a bald eagle," Mario said. From his aerie, the eagle was looking out to a sweeping vista of the Brooks Range and the Kongakut River. For the moment anyway, the bird was either resting from his forging for food duties or posing lackadaisically for us as the national symbol. He was more concerned about his own welfare than any reciprocal patriotic musings he might have entertained for ten intruding human beings paddling below his nest home. The eagle basically ignored us and rightly so, we had provided nothing to enhance his life.



"Unlike foolish humans who dump in the water and risk hypothermia, I fly over the river in search of food." A smirky bald eagle relaxes atop a high cliff and is happy to be spared running rapids.

The United States government had supposedly protected this bird with laws to improve his lot. As a country, we have legally embraced the eagle as a sacred symbol, affixing his likeness on this nation's coins, paper money, stamps, military insignia ("full bird colonel" in US Army lingo), athletic team names and uniforms, passports and the Great Seal of the United States. But beyond this public relations lip service, Americans have fallen short in their watered down treatment. The supposedly elite, honored eagle has been regulated by benign neglect to share the same disrespect as if he were a nuisance pigeon or turkey buzzard.

Corporate industrial America would love to negate the current legal protection given to the area and extract oil and minerals from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. If successful, this 180° shift in policy would threaten to wreck, at least partially, the eagle's habitat as well as compromising his food supply. To the west and the adjacent Prudhoe Bay petroleum mega developed complex, his less fortunate eagle cousin, while hovering airborne over oil wells and spills, had to scurry that much harder for his nest and meals. The Prudhoe eagle could flap his wings and squawk defiantly in protest to such a shabby deal, but that was about all.

I admired the eagle's independence. Unlike us struggling below with rapids and rock hazards, along with being mildly apprehensive in the search for a suitable campsite, he was home for the night, oblivious to any thought of a tent, sleeping bag and stove for survival. He was spiritually free.

In due time we arrived safely at a gravel bar campsite and soon gathered under the red tarp for supper, to enjoy Mario's pasta du jour, his specialty.



Not exactly a Frank Lloyd Wright architectural masterpiece but perfectly adequate for our needs. Upended canoes doubled as excellent walls for our cook/dining tent.

Such expeditions are not all whitewater John Wayne heroics, movie script thrillers, wildlife sightings, hiking treks or endless chores on or off the water. Equally, and if not more, meaningful were our most enjoyable social gatherings in the cook shelter for breakfast and supper, together with lunch and snack stops on the river. We reminisced about our past trips and our plans for the future, indeed discussed any subject which might please us. While sipping hot coffee, tea or cocoa in our cups, every person had a story or two to tell. Fortified with these steaming drinks, we listened to one of Jacek's innumerable stories, this particular one prompted by tea.

"Rommel, the German general, shrewd as he was, during the World War II North African campaign, knew that the British army

invariably participated in a ritual tea break about 5pm every afternoon. This custom left them off guard. That's when he attacked.

"In my duties as a mechanic in the Warsaw Pact Polish army, part of my job was to familiarize myself with the opposition (NATO's) weapons and equipment. In the English tanks, I noticed that there was always an interior compartment room designed for their tea breaks. Otherwise they would have had to come outside and be exposed to enemy fire."

Matt held forth on his Coast Guard responsibilities with interdicting drug cargo boats off the Central American coast.

"The objectives of the Coast Guard have changed in recent years. It used to be that our primary mission was preoccupied with saving lives. Now the Guard wants to stop the drug trade from reaching the United States.

"I boarded these boats at sea. The smuggler crew always gave up immediately. If they resisted, we would immediately call in larger, faster ships and helicopters with overwhelming firepower. They fully understood this possibility. The smugglers also knew that a percentage of their boats would be captured. Others would get through and land."



"I've never heard that one before!" As we listen to tall tale #87 inside the dining room lounge, we hear unbelievable stories, way beyond the ken of Jack London, Robert Service and Rex Beach.

Joselyn was excited about her future outdoor plans. To keep in shape, she always started every morning on our expedition with about ten minutes of yoga exercises. I noticed that she was carrying around a copy of the book *Seven Summits* for reading in her spare time. "I hope to climb the seven summits (the highest points of the seven continents)," she said. "My plan is to climb Denali (Mount McKinley) soon."



As talk turned to climbing the 50 high points in the 50 states, my past achievements and future plans were much more modest. During my peak bagging career in my younger days I had collected 11 fairly easy walkup hills and mountains, ten in the east and one in the Rocky Mountains. Some high points even have paved roads to the top. I know I would never complete the list, Denali, of course, being the highest, toughest and most dangerous. "I have an idea," I told the group. "I'll descend to the lowest points of all 50 states. Hanging out on the beach is fine with me."

Finally Mario and I talked about Skagway and the Trail of '98 over Chilkoot Pass, the route taken by many overly optimistic prospectors en route to the Klondike gold fields over a century ago. We were both veterans of that saga. My Chilkoot Pass/Trail of '98 hike occurred back in 1971, some 43 years ago. Alaska tourism was just getting fully established then, a time before the pipeline, jumbo cruise ships, Outward Bound and National Outdoor Leadership School courses and a paved Alaska Highway. Now the Trail of '98 hike, some 33 miles and taking three days, has become a cult trek.

"I hiked the trail alone," I said, "and only encountered people at the Sheep Camp and Lake Lindeman shelters. There were no commercially guided outfitting trips back then. Now it is a much more streamlined, promoted event. When I scrambled up on my hands and knees at times to the top of the pass and entered Canada, the only manmade object was a plaque mounted on a boulder commemorating the Gold Rush pioneers."

"I have hiked the Trail of '98 four times," Mario said. "Nowadays there is a Canadian ranger station at the top. Inside the shelter, rangers on duty are glad to serve the public in any way, hot drinks, medicine, basic first aid, along with advice and suggestions, to render safety. The hut is also used as a place of refuge during inclement weather."



"Where will you go on your next trip?" Within the relaxed atmosphere of the cook tent, plans to go on forthcoming expeditions take shape over a cup of coffee or tea.

As perhaps a smart alecky afterthought, I wondered if the uniformed authorities currently could possibly be checking passports at this desolate place. Back in 1971, in an earlier, less complicated world, I encountered no one at the Chilkoot Pass summit and resumed my hike without a second thought as to what the officials in Washington and Ottawa might be thinking. I carried no passport and did not need one.

We were ready to hit the river again. This day was blessed with bright sunshine as we anticipated the toughest, most technical stretch of the entire descent, Class Two

and Class Three rapids, complete with sharp rocks, pillows, haystacks and a wretched, boulder strewn shore. The river would be funneling through Gunsight Pass. The barreling white power was so great that tossed up, geyser like drops glistened in the sun. One had to shout to be heard, bellowing out commands and warnings. With good luck, we paddled, with bad luck we lined and lifted our boats over rocks and ledges.

Mario recommended that I should stay in the canoe for safety. On occasion I was compelled to jump out in shallow water and stumble for shore as Mario grabbed a rope for lining. Mario charged ahead as a virtuoso track star, guiding the raft between boulders, scraping across others, letting out rope or yanking it in as the situation demanded. Leaping from rock to rock, or plowing through calf high water almost at a full run, he stumbled at times, caught himself, but never fell.



With the canoe occasionally bouncing off boulders, Mario the magnificent leaps from rock to rock on the dead run during his lining through obstacles.

"We'll stop here," he shouted as I jumped out and climbed up a tortuous stretch of angular tumbledown boulders. I used my paddle as a cane to hop around on rock pile jumble extending for miles on the banks. Mario lined the canoe over a perilous section and then curled a rope to a cone-shaped boulder. Once the boat was secure, he hustled back to help the others. The lining ordeal, with its slippery insecure footing, was just as dangerous as running whitewater rapids.

Between linings we battled the white-water runs, vaulting up to a crest and then crashing down into a hole, time and again. The spanked water flew up to splash my face. "Yahoo, yahoo," Mario and I shouted in unison like little kids.

We often approached a welcome stretch of stillwater, only to react to new challenges. With the roar of the next rapids in the distance, the river braided into two streams wrapping around gravel islands which blocked the middle of the river lead we usually ran. "Which



"Yo ho, heave ho!" We do not rank with Volga boatmen, but come in as a close second. Lining one's boat in the Kongakut rock gardens and rapids is always treacherous, with slippery footing.

side?" I shouted. Mario read the river in a second and yelled out the proper direction. Even the apparent high water side sweeping around a bend often deteriorated into shallows and grounded us. Every raft in the expedition was caught up in low water. After much exertion, we scraped through to deeper water. By now a stiff upstream, off the Arctic Ocean wind began to buffet us. By late afternoon we arrived safely at a pick your own and make the best of it campsite. A cloudy weather front defused mist over the mountains.

By the next morning we all knew that it was going to rain, at least to mist. We readily accepted "a day in camp" scenario. Mario took it all in stride. "On these Arctic trips," he said, "bad weather usually lasts just a day." At any rate, if we were compelled to extend a day or several days beyond our scheduled take out coordinated with the bush pilots, the outfitter allowed for an unforeseen grace period without extra charge.

Rainy or windy days in camp on any expedition usually degenerate to an overall tedium of updating one's journal, doing laundry, taking cat naps in one's tent, moping around and eating snacks in the cook tent.

Upon awakening from every cat nap light slumber, I always experienced a strange sensation, almost a hallucination. For the first half second of semi consciousness my drowsy brain wavered. I sensed I was home in bed, laying on a comfortable mattress and covered with sheets and blankets. A second later, jolted with a slight mental shock, I realized I was actually encased in a sleeping bag, hundreds of miles from civilization.

Mario took charge of the lack of something to do mood and offered a suggestion. "Today's a good day for a change of underwear," he said, in a most solemn manner. "Dick can change with Walt, Walt with Matt and so on down the line." We all laughed at this sage advice.

Notwithstanding the ominous looking weather, Matt and Joselyn, two undaunted physical fitness stalwarts, decided to cross the river to the opposite bank aboard a canoe in order to hike and climb up to the sawtooth ridge. Talus slopes were strewn haphazardly with green bands of grass and stunted vegetation interwoven over the mountainside. It would be a steep climb but gradual enough to allow a safe ascent.

"Be sure you get back by dark," Mario cautioned. This advice made sense. A few

seconds later I realized his comment was another Mario joke. With daylight reigning 24 hours a day in the land of the midnight sun during June, it would not be until late July that darkness and nightfall would gradually descend. Otherwise, if Mario's advice were followed to the letter, Matt and Joselyn would be gone for over a month without returning. I correctly surmised that they would return by late afternoon with no desire to live off the land for such a protracted period. They did return, having reached the second notch, "good training," as the military adage expresses it.

After the misty day in camp delay, we awoke to a bright sun. The weather was ideal for paddling ten miles to our campsite, just a short distance from our take out at the airstrip. Our party arrived as safely as professionals, no dumps, no falls, no injuries and no lost or damaged equipment.

We were comfortably on schedule and our final full day would be ideal for a tundra trek hike. I decided I would accompany the group until my arthritic knees and huff and puff wind power would be a burden to the rest. Jacek, in fact, with his weak knees, was content to say behind in camp, tending a fire. The main party would scramble over the false summit ridge and continue on for a vista of Demarcation Point and Icy Reef, the shoreline of the Beaufort Sea, part of the Arctic Ocean.

I wanted to see the caribou more closely, assuming a herd might be passing across the slope. We had encountered scattered animals daily on our expedition. In the mornings I had glanced upward on the slopes to see perhaps a dozen caribou grazing peacefully like cows in a pasture. After feeding on the grasses, they had raised their heads and trotted away.

As we continued south to north during the expedition, we encountered more and more caribou every day. Instinctively intelligent, the caribou sought to linger as long as possible in the northern colder temperatures with the wind blowing off the ocean. This delay before heading south for the winter reduced the relentless attack of mosquitoes, black flies and other insects. Heading south prematurely would result in more bites and harassment, making them all the weaker. A caribou, even in the wind, someone told me, will usually lose a pint of blood daily to these parasites, heartless vampires attacking even the inner nostrils for nourishment.

As I climbed upward, I often wondered why the caribou usually stayed high on the slopes, obviously to their advantage in catching the wind, but neglecting to descend below to the river for water. In due time they would, indeed, climb down to cross the river in their annual migration. Amateur naturalist that I was, I surmised why they trotted across and grazed on the higher elevations as long as they did. On my upward climb I often encountered, in fact high stepped over or took a circuitous end run around numerous trench gullies with elongated puddles of recent rainwater, a convenient drinking fountain for wildlife.

With Mario in the lead, I was the trail end hiker. Jocelyn stayed with me as I struggled to keep up the pace. Finally I told her that I would willingly drop out, satisfied with the height I had gained. Within a few minutes I saw the younger trekkers ascending the ridge to disappear over the side.

I was alone. I sat down. I was a little kid and could not wait for lunch. Even though it

was just mid morning I reached in my day pack and ate my food.

A cycloramic vista spread out in all directions. Below were the light yellow tents and the red canvas roof of the kitchen. The braided river twisted back and forth in a maze of gravel bars, grass covered islands and oxbows. Above me patches of snow clung on ridges and at the base of cliff knob walls, providing shadow. A few caribou in the far distance ambled at will.

I saw no bears. I could not resist taking a little rest and to lie down in safety, my pack as a pillow. I did not close my eyes. Within a minute I sensed, then heard, the sound of something scuffling on the tundra. I rose my head to see a herd of about 40 or 50 caribou gamboling leisurely, perhaps 30 yards up the slope. I did not rise to my knees as any movement would have spooked them. Four mature animals, all in a row, stopped and peered down to look at me. Curious and motionless, they stared at me, completely at ease and satisfied that I would constitute no harm to them. They soon rambled off to join the rest of the herd. On the horizon I saw a couple of stags with their magnificent antlers silhouetted against the sky. I was thrilled to see the annual migration which has gone continuously for thousands of years.



Posing with a rack of moose antlers, frequently found on the tundra, is a routine photograph of any northern expedition. Notwithstanding that some animals are taken by subsistence or legally licensed hunters, perhaps a few illegally poached, most moose here die of old age in such a rarely visited and remote place.

After dinner that evening, I left the cook tent for a casual hike. I wanted to shake down my meal for good digestion and also to recreate my private self, a sense of peace with my own thoughts. While relaxing for me, I knew, nevertheless, that I would be missing all the great stories being told back at camp.

I hiked along the level ground atop the bluff, parallel to the river. In the distance there was a hill. To my surprise, I realized that I had stumbled upon an abandoned smoothed out gravel airstrip. In the bush there were plenty of tent sites, making it easy to break camp and load the planes, a walk of a few yards with heavy packs. A caribou had



Follow the leader! Caribou do not generally follow rocky talus slides or ravines on their migrations and prefer easy gentle slope routes on the tundra. "Let it blow! Let it blow!" On their annual migration, the caribou seek the higher Brooks Range elevations during the summer for the sweep of cold wind which reduces the chance of insect bites.

wandered through the area and died, probably of natural causes, leaving a parched white skull and antlers.

Like most extractive enterprises in the North, whether mining, logging, fish camps or even military facilities, once it had served its purpose, the site was summarily abandoned without any pretext of a clean up restoration whatsoever. Few would ever know about or see this place anyway, just another extremely remote airstrip now gone and forgotten.

Once back at camp, I asked Mario why the airstrip had been abandoned. "A few years ago," he said, "I landed here when it was an active strip. But the bush pilots were wary of the distant hill when they landed. Once they taxied around for take off in the opposite direction, they had to become quickly airborne before the runway ended with an immediate drop off below to the river. So they decided to utilize a long gravel bar in the Kongakut downstream in the interests of safety. The new strip is half a mile away. We'll be there tomorrow."

The next morning we were leisurely drinking from our mugs after breakfast as we stood outside the cook tent kitchen. We looked around at the hills and saw close to perfect weather conditions, at least at that time of day, for our flight back to Fairbanks. Two had binoculars as they checked the scene.

Suddenly, there he was! A huge grizzly bear was ambling about up on the slope, about a quarter mile away from my caribou sighting vista the day before. Someone had

sensed something moving and then sighted the animal more closely with his binocs. I could see the brown form with my naked eye. The brute was upwind from us and, with his poor eyesight, knew nothing of our presence.

Suddenly the bear bolted, perhaps he sensed us after all, and ran up the hill at about 30 miles an hour. At a full speed gallop, his shoulder muscles rippled as his clawed feet dug into the tundra grass. Within seconds he reached the skyline and disappeared over the crest. He was gone. The entire incident from our initial sighting to his barreling over the ridge amounted to less than a minute. Bear hate human smell. He had left, satisfied on his own terms.

Soon back to work to drop the tents and to pack gear, we were compelled to drag the canoes through shallow water for about 30 yards. Finally the canoes floated and we loaded them for the last time on the trip. As we had experienced so often on the expedition, the Kongakut, sneaky as it was, changed quickly from boney stretches to powerful whitewater with plenty of kick. "Don't take me cheap," the river seemed to be saying as it tore loose with great wave crests, the spray splashing my face. No one wanted to suffer the indignity of dumping less than a half mile from our gravel bar airstrip take out. I did not "Yahoo" with my voice as we swept downstream.

We made it! We beached at the landing strip identified with red flagging. Mario supervised the deflating of the canoes, sponging the water off and rolling them up tight



Last day it is loading involves dragging the canoes out on a shallow stretch of the braided river. High boots, balance and a willing disposition are mandatory for wading with heavy packs and bear barrels.

with cinch straps in order to wedge them down in blue bags. We posed for the standard group photograph, with Mario setting his timer and hustling back to be included in the photo. One might say the trip was over.



Smile for your Christmas card picture. The traditional end of the expedition group photo ascertains that no one appears to be missing. We await the bush plane to be on our way.

But in a larger sense the quest was not over, and never will be over, the Kongakut only teasing us to continue on with so many more rivers to run. But like athletes trying to outrun the sun, we would never finish them all in too short a lifetime.

Every person was looking ahead to new wilderness explorations, an addiction in paddling new waterways. There would be no rest as each was nurturing his next trip.

Mario would continue his guiding, backpacking, canoeing and rafting expeditions throughout the summer until it was time to return to Stevens Pass. Next year he would return to Alaska.

Joselyn, with her boundless energy, would savor no rest as she was headed the next day to Denali National Park for a hiking trip. Matt would be going on a ten day solo backpacking trek in the same park.

Jacek was ready for another Grand Canyon rafting trip. After the turmoil of his youth, perhaps he craved peace and relaxation in the desert wilderness.

More birding along the Rio Grande in the Great Bend National Park beckoned Walt and Alicia.

Marty and Nancy would return to Tanzania for more volunteer high school teaching. Then they would be off on safari.

Earl was set to head for his hideaway cabin in western Michigan and perhaps a backpacking trip with Marty before the latter left for Africa. After that, Earl was hoping to be traveling to Brazil's Pantanal, the world's largest tropical wetland area, where he would find enough to do. The Pantanal sprawls over perhaps 54,000 to 75,000 square miles.

For myself, I would fly back to New England for six weeks and then return north for a ten day paddle on the Little Bell, Bell and Porcupine Rivers in northern Yukon Territory, Canada, for more caribou migrations. I would finish the season on Maine's splash of lakes and rivers during fall foliage.

After that, who knows? Hopefully our party can rendezvous as a team again for another Brooks Range expedition. The caribou, grizzlies and bald eagles will be there. We'll have grayling, Arctic char, Northern pike and land locked salmon cookouts. All of us are excited, thinking about this incredible land — and our next trip.

Practical Information

The Brooks Range is so vast, so immense and so rugged, that acquiring the services of a professional guide and/or a bush pilot is almost mandatory to ensure safety, even survival.

Half baked amateur do it yourselves, even a few of them going it alone as solo adventurers, wander, climb and paddle in the wilds annually in the Far North. Most of these fools remain alive through their ordeals, a number tracked down by rescue parties. Some are never seen again. In a few cases, their remains are tragically discovered. Be smart. Rely and insist upon professional help.

For Kongakut River Guide Service

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Karen Jettmar

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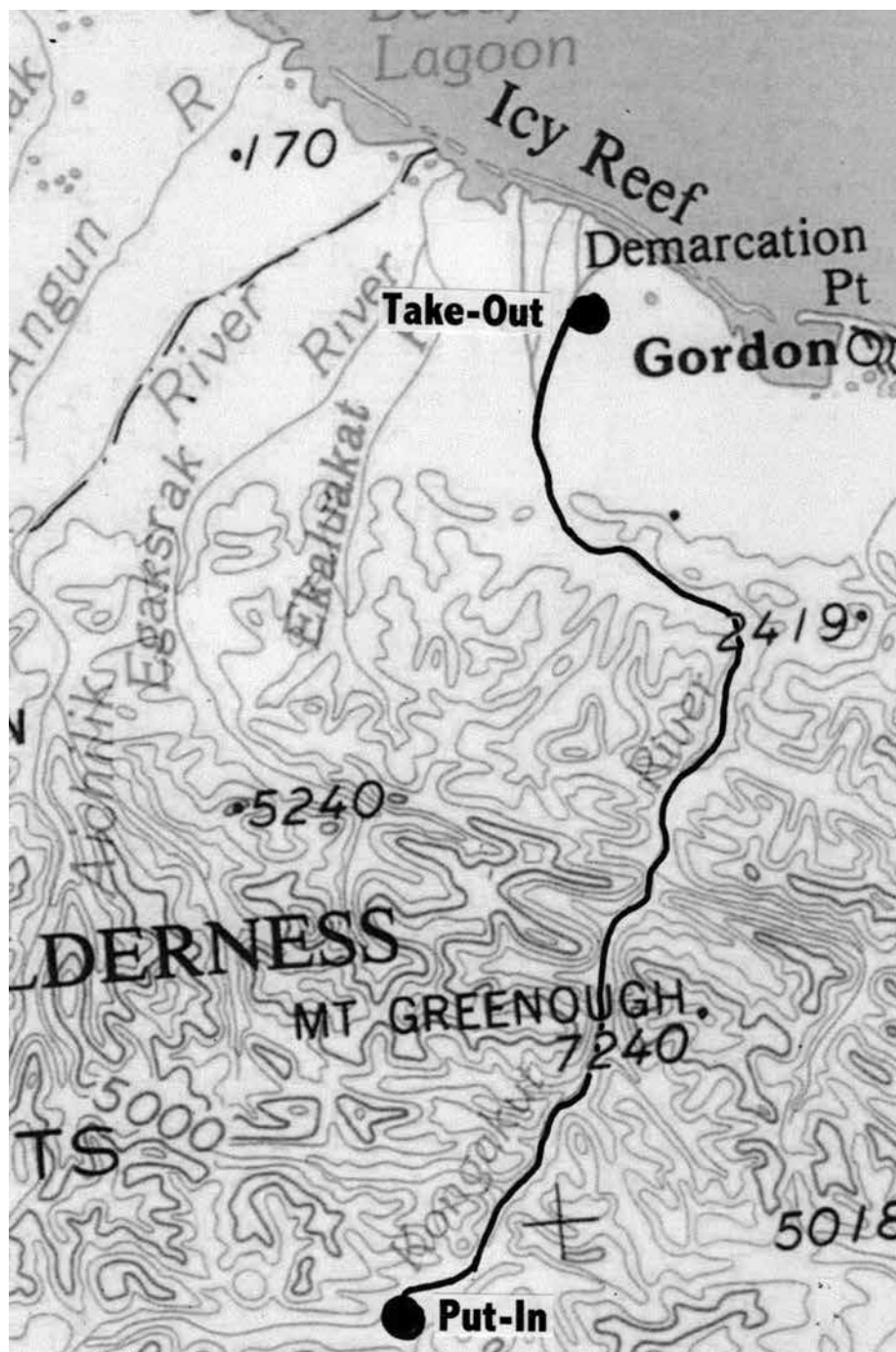
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I carried my little canoe to the water's edge and launched it through the weeds and grass at the back of the lot owned by my parents. It was a beautiful sunny day with little wind and I was eager to be out in my small boat, all alone. I was also glad to be away from the family for a while. My parents planned to spend the day picnicking and swimming, which would have been fine except that my sister's boyfriend was along as well and I was expected to be nice to him. I didn't like him. Probably most big brothers have that reaction to their sister's boyfriends, but I had reason. He was tall and good looking, a fact he knew all too well, and he had not done himself any good by making unkind remarks about my canoe. It seems he knew all about canoes because he had done some paddling, and the one he had used was not made of scrap wood.

My parents lot was on Paw Paw Lake, a small private pond with an old residential allotment along its shores. Their lot was one of the few with no house, but they would build there one day. For the present, their ownership gave me access to the lake so I could paddle my canoe and maybe do a little fishing. I knew the lake well, for I had been coming there for years to fish with the permission of a resident who was a friend of the family. It was a pretty lake set between two hills, mostly shallow and a bit weedy, but there were a few deep spots along the shore, one of them down by the dam next to the swimming area, a place I had sometimes used

Revenge of the Scrap Wood Canoe

By Hugh Groth

to launch the canoe from before my parents place was available. It had a nice grass covered shore ending just the right "dock" height above the water.

I had built my boat from a plan for a 16' canoe, but I didn't have enough material for the full 16' called for in the plan. This canoe was only for me, so I figured I would not need such a long boat and smaller would be lighter and easier to carry. I did not know a lot about canoe design and it did not occur to me that the wide, relatively flat center section is where initial stability comes from, so I eliminated the center 4' of the plan. As a result the canoe was very unstable but very fast. I would have liked more stability but I could manage it and I liked the speed.

It was not an elegant canoe, for I had ripped ribs and planking from available construction lumber and soaked the ribs in hot water to make them bendable. Several ribs cracked or broke and the wood surface was rough from the saw cuts. I had a hard time twisting ribs and planking into place, resulting in a few lumps in the fabric covering in spots. To make matters worse, the copper tacks I used to fasten the planking poked through the ribs in places, requiring great

care when kneeling to paddle. It didn't matter to me, for all I cared about was that it floated without leaking. I knew the boyfriend was right. It wasn't a lovely canoe, but he didn't have to tell me.

I was still stewing about it as I paddled around the lake looking for wildlife. There was a heron fishing for bluegills near the inlet stream, a couple of turtles sunning themselves on a log and the water was clear enough to see the fish swimming under the canoe. My mood improved. I noticed as I neared the swimming area that the family had come down for a swim, all except for Adonis, for he did not have his swim suit with him. He was still in his Sunday clothes. He called over to me, "Hey, how about letting me have a turn in that thing, if that's the best you have for a boat ride." I told him I'd be glad to let him take a turn and pulled up to the deep area by the grassy shore. I got out and handed him the paddle as he strode confidently down the lawn. I knew this would be good.

He got one foot into the canoe and kneeled on the bottom, promptly tearing his pants on the tacks. Then, the moment he lifted his other foot off the grassy shore the little craft spun like a log. He came up sputtering, ready to fire off a string of unkind epithets at the little canoe, but when he saw the look on my face he thought better of it. He knew he had it coming and the object of his ridicule had bested him. I don't recall seeing him around much after that afternoon at the lake.

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What kind of boat does a master boat builder build for himself in retirement after a long and successful professional career? Chances are a very special one. This is the case with Ernest "Dick" Hartge and *Spirit*, a 22' strip planked centerboard sloop completed in 1976 when he was 81 years old. Dick Hartge was a well known Chesapeake Bay boat designer and builder. His designs include several boats that sailed in the still active Chesapeake 20 class. His round bottomed variant first built in the late 1930s became the de facto standard for the class. *Spirit* shares a strong family resemblance with his round bottomed Chesapeake 20s. However, *Spirit* is 2' longer, a double ender (his Chesapeake 20 has a transom) with wider side decks and a small oval varnished teak trimmed cockpit. While Dick Hartge was no stranger to paper plans, it appears that *Spirit* was designed and built directly from a carved half model.



Spirit was sailed by the Hartge family in Florida, where she was built, and later on the Chesapeake Bay. She eventually ended up in long term storage in a barn on Maryland's eastern shore. Still showing her thoroughbred lines, but in need of some restoration, *Spirit* was donated by the Hartge family to the Calvert Marine Museum (CMM) in Solomons, Maryland, in August 2013.

CMM Patuxent Small Craft Guild (PSCG) members led by Tony Pettit, under the direction of CMM boatwright George Surgent, performed restoration work from fall 2013 through summer 2014. Work included stripping and refinishing the hull, deck and spars, repairing cracked frames and centerboard, modifications to rig and floorboards, new tiller, new sails, new cover.

I joined the Patuxent Small Craft Guild in the summer of 2014 and had the good fortune to participate in *Spirit's* sea trials on a sunny Saturday with a light breeze on the Patuxent River. The boat was a joy to sail. With three people on board, my overriding impression was one of essential lightness. There didn't seem to be one ounce more weight built into *Spirit* than needed. She was a flyer! She also turned a lot of heads on the river, something she does wherever she sails. One gentleman in a nice motorboat came close aboard and asked if she was a Chesapeake 20, one of which he had sailed years ago. We briefly explained the family resemblance and he sped off smiling, enjoying memories of good sailing in good boats.

One of the best times a small boater can have on the Chesapeake is to attend the annual Mid Atlantic Small Craft Festival (MASCF, pronounced "mas-if"), held the first weekend in October at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St Michaels, Maryland. It is beyond the scope of this article to try and describe MASCF. Suffice it to say, if you've been, you know. If you

Spirit Goes to MASCF

By Brian Forsyth



haven't been yet, you must. One day at the CMM boatshop, George casually dropped the suggestion that it would be fun to bring *Spirit* to MASCF. I instantly agreed.

Someone then pointed out that, at the time, we had no trailer for *Spirit*. St Michaels is an easy two and a half hour drive from Solomons, but a 50 mile trip by water. Oh well, in for a penny, in for a pound. A plan was quickly formed. Tony and I would sail *Spirit* there and back accompanied by a mothership, the beautiful *Bella Luna*, a 1983 Union 36 cutter, skippered by owner Al Rondina, with Ed Richard as crew. George would drive over (because he could) trailering his personal Van Dine Crotch Island Pinky *Buna-Mon-I-Ya*.

The reality of the trip to and from St Michaels in *Spirit* was somewhat easier than I thought it would be. We planned to get a tow from *Bella Luna* if we had no wind or wind on the nose. Of course, it was on the nose for most of the trip, coming and going. So it ended up being a nine hour trip each way, mostly under tow at six knots dead to windward but with a few periods of great sailing in beautiful sunny fall weather.

Before we left Solomons, George had told us to keep a watch out as we passed Poplar Island, as Dick Hartge's son Totch, who lives on the Eastern Shore, was going to try to intercept us and take a few photos. Sure enough, just north of Poplar Island we spotted Totch's Bristol Sisu 22 launch *Kingfisher*, which he quickly brought alongside. Totch handed us a bottle of fine champagne and thanked us for CMM's efforts to restore the boat and get her sailing again. He peeled off, promising to come see the sailboat race at the festival on Saturday.

Totch Hartge in *Kingfisher*, preparing to transfer champagne to *Spirit*.



Once we cleared Tilghman Point and turned into the Miles River we had a fair wind and cast off the towline. We hoisted the Calvert County "tobacco leaf" flag with 15' black and gold streamers to the masthead and sailed into St Michaels harbor on Thursday evening.



Tony readying the Calvert County colors, with mothership *Bella Luna* looking on.



Friday was spent catching up with many friends, taking in all the other cool boats at the festival and showing off *Spirit*. The CMM staff had made us a nice display board for the boat and we had a photo album of original construction, Hartge family sailing and restoration shots. It was a lot of fun talking about the boat with other festival participants and answering questions. Friday night we enjoyed a first class dinner whipped up by Al on board *Bella Luna*, anchored in the river. I am a dedicated "one pot" small boater, but that was the kind of experience that can make one really appreciate the comforts of a nice big boat.

The MASCF sailboat race on Saturday afternoon was something we were all looking forward to. It is the most fun sailing race imaginable, short, with a crazy variety of boats all converging for a single start and no prizes other than ribbons and bragging rights. We wanted to do well by *Spirit*. Race crew on *Spirit* was Tony, Ed and myself. There was a fresh breeze on the river and we were moving along smartly before the race with just the mainsail up. We decided to race with a reefed main and jib.

After an insane start with about 40 boats jockeying for the line, things settled down pretty quickly. I'll admit I didn't pay

too much attention to where the race marks were. Typically when racing I just follow the other boats. But there were no boats to follow! We crossed the line several boat lengths ahead of the next finisher. Totch and his wife Lisa met us on the dock as we tied up. There was already open champagne on the dock due to the christening of a beautiful new Marsh Cat, so we celebrated with them and shared Totch's gift bottle later that night at the awards dinner.

Ed and Tony after finishing the sailing race.



Classes were determined after the race, which made a lot of sense given the wide variety of boats racing and the single start. Obviously we won our class. Norm Wolfe, a well known Shallow Water Sailor, also took first place in the Cruising Class in his Norms-boat *Piilu*. In addition to a racing blue ribbon, *Spirit* was also awarded a ribbon for her restoration. Both awards were a tribute to Dick Hartge who created her, the Hartge family who entrusted her to us and the CMM staff and PSCG volunteers who had gotten this special boat to MASCF.

Spirit

Designer / Builder: Ernest "Dick" Hartge

Type: Centerboard Sloop

Hull: Strip planked Juniper
(Atlantic White Cedar)

Launched: 1976 in Eustis, Florida

Length: 22'

Beam: 7'

Draft: (CB up) 8" — (CB down) 4'



Really Messin' About in Boats

By Kent Lacey

We were in a movie filmed for the History Channel back in 2004, it likely was released in 2005. Had to due with Civil War attack by Lt William Cushing in a small steam launch sinking the Confederate iron-clad *CSS Albermarle* behind enemy lines at night. The film was made in many different locations. Photos here were filmed on Otter Creek and Lake Champlain, Vermont. The movie title is *Most Daring Mission of the Civil War*. The CD can be purchased from the History Channel and elsewhere. We had two steam launches equipped with spar torpedoes and deck guns. Lots of smoke from black powder cannons, rifles and pistols, lots of fun making the film. Now that is really Messin' About in Boats!



Along the Jersey coast, from Bay Head down, is a fringe of sand islands separated from the shore by a strip of water varying in width from the stretch of five miles at Barnegat to the narrow thoroughfare below Ocean City, which is only a few yards across, and goes winding through broad meadows.

It had long been a pet idea with the boys at Barnegat City to sail round Cape May to Philadelphia in their fourteen-foot sneak boxes. There was considerable danger attached to the trip, for the boats were not intended for deep water, and moreover there was a bar to be crossed at Cold Spring Inlet where it was necessary to go out to sea, and the yacht captains had warned us so persistently of the dangers of crossing a bar that we had come to regard all bars with instinctive dread.

But notwithstanding the dangers prophesied we finally decided to go—that is, two of did. And so one day, in the latter part of last August, we loaded our little craft with the usual supply of clothes, quilts and provisions, and on a certain Wednesday afternoon we sailed from the little wharf in the cover, followed by the good wishes of our friends who had gathered to see us off.

We stood on down the broad, shallow cover where the grass lies bare in masses at low water. To our right were low meadow islands, beyond which was the bay, its farther shore barely distinguishable. The shore to our left was edged by a broad belt of meadow, and across this could be seen high sand hills, crested with coarse grass. These hills lay along the beach, and even from our low position we could see the black smoke of a steamer out on the ocean.

We were mainly interested, however, in taking last looks at Barnegat City, where we had spent so many pleasant days, and we found ourselves wondering if we would ever see it again, for we were prone to be pessimistic at that moment.

From the first cover we passed to a second, which was almost a perfect triangle, with the apex on the shore, and the broad base opening on the bay.

We rounded the southern point and saw lying before us a broad expanse of water, studded with numerous low, grassy islands. Along the shore were several villages, scattered at a distance of a few miles. "Nothing but the lighthouse left in sight now," said Charlie, looking back. I turned, and sure enough every sign of the village was hidden by the point just rounded except the red and white tower of the lighthouse.

"And here we go, the three of us," he went on, rather dolefully. "You me and the boat,"

ROUND CAPE MAY POINT IN A SNEAK BOX

by T. Harry Walnut

(From the June
1902 issue of *Rudder*.
Submitted by
Roger Allen)

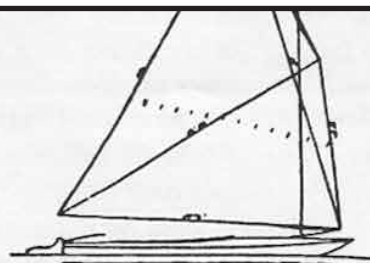


and he was more than half in earnest, for the boat seemed almost like a person.

We made a quick trip of the nine miles to the Barnegat draw, for the tide and wind were with us. The draw was closed, by the bridgeman opened for us when we blew our conch shell, which was a specimen of good nature that we did not experience again during the whole trip. Shortly after passing the bridge we crossed the dividing line between the two inlets, Barnegat and Little Egg Harbor, and met the flood tide. The line is known as The Bonnet, and at low water it is almost bare.

Toward evening the gray clouds that had covered the sky all day grew heavier, and a fine driving rain began to fall. We were crossing a broad expanse of water just above Little Egg Harbor Inlet at the time, and as darkness was coming on rapidly we decided to put up in the lee of a lofty cedar-crowned sand hill rising right from the water's edge, on the tip of a long point. From a distance in the dim light it looked like a purple mountain. As we drew nearer we caught sight of a little house peeping out from the thick covert of cedars. It was a most lonely place for a habitation and, as we knew, the man who had live there had deserted it long ago. It was a ghostly sort of place, too, on such a night, so we persuaded ourselves that we preferred sleeping in the boat to putting up our army A tent on shore. We cast anchor in a sheltered spot and put up our cover.

25 Years Ago in MAIB



CRUISING SNEAKBOX—SAIL PLAN

There was just room enough inside of this to let us in. I sat in the middle of the hatch, with my back against the after deck and my feet doubled under me like a Turk, while Charlie squeezed into a space not an inch too large for his rather small body, between the centerboard trunk and the deck. On the other side of the trunk we placed the oil stove. There was one advantage in such close quarters—nothing could get far out of reach, but that was counterbalanced by the agony of moving. Charlie was absolutely helpless in his seat, and I had to go through all sorts of contortions to get a plate or a box from behind me. But we did not complain, and in fact, were rather pleased with our close quarters, as we said that it made it so cozy. When it came time to spread the quilts on the floor, one of us had to crawl out astern, taking particular pains not to disturb the crosspiece that supported the boom, and sit there in the chilly, damp night air while the other made the beds. Then we would crawl into our respective sides and lie till we fell asleep, listening to the little waves slapping the bottom of the boat, with nothing but the thickness of an inch plank between them and us. It was a lucky thing we were both small, or we could never have lived as we did.

The morning dawned cloudy and rainy, with the wind still northeast. When I awoke the lighthouse at Sea Haven was still flashing its red and white rays out to sea. I waded ashore and drew a bucket of water from the pump by the deserted house, and we had breakfast. Then we packed away our various articles as well as we could in such small compass, and set off before the wind across Little Egg Harbor Inlet. Our course was once furrowed by numberless privateers; for, in the war of '76 and later, in 1812 Tuckerton was a nest of privateers that found Brigantine Inlet a convenient refuge to dodge into, and Tuckerton a fine place in which to dispose of prizes. The only signs of shipping at this time, however, were two lumber schooners, whose crews were idling about the decks waiting for the ebb tide to carry them to sea.

We left them behind and headed across Great Bay (as the water back of the inlet is called) toward the west, and from here we went by a narrow connecting channel into Grassy Bay, and across this shallow, grass-covered pond to the Brigantine draw, where there was scarcely six inches of water, as the tide was down, and we had to get out and drag our boat after us. On the other side we entered a twisting thoroughfare that brought us out on the north side of Absecon Inlet, right beside the pier used by the steamers from Atlantic city. Then by various thor-

oughfares leading through the meadows we were carried past the great summer resort. But at its very end our way was barred by two railroad bridges, and but a short distance beyond them was a third, for the turnpike. The keepers would not deign to open for us, so we had to take out our mast and paddle through all three.

We tied up on the far side of the last one and went ashore to buy some fruit at the farmers' market, which is the only quaint spot in all Atlantic. We felt remarkably glad to leave this town behind, for its rear view is distasteful to more senses than one.

The remainder of the day we spent in a winding thoroughfare which finally, about sundown, brought us out on Great Egg Harbor Inlet, which we crossed in high spirits, for the sun was setting in a clear sky that augured fine weather for the following day. We pitched our tent that night in a little grove of cedars north of Ocean City and spent the following day there. But early Saturday morning we were up and off again, bucking against a strong ebb tide with only a faint head wind to carry us along. At last we came to a cornucopia-shaped piece of water, called Peck's Bay, at the narrow end of which was a thoroughfare narrower and more winding than any yet, which well deserves its name of Crook Horn.

Not far beyond the entrance it was spanned by a peculiar looking drawbridge, seemingly too clumsy to move. The keeper evidently thought as much, for he scarcely cast one look at our little craft from the door of his house and then returned to his easy chair. A lone fisherman sat on the bridge, who grinned at us as we rowed laboriously against the current under his dangling heels.

It was afternoon when we finally came out on Corson's Inlet where a clean stretch of sand enticed us to take a swim. On crossing the inlet we entered another thoroughfare and toward evening came into Ludlum Bay, just back of Sea Isle City. The high tide and the setting sun combined to make the usually unsightly meadows almost pretty. Sighting over them from our low position they looked like a well-kept lawn.

We went up to town that evening and laid in a new supply of provisions, as the next day was Sunday. When we came down to our boat, it seemed like coming into a bewitched spot, it was so still. There was not a breath of wind and the water and meadows were deserted. The only habitation within a mile was a large ramshackle building in the last stages of disrepair, which rather enhanced the loneliness of the place by the sense of mystery pervading it. We poled some distance from shore, hoping in that way to escape the

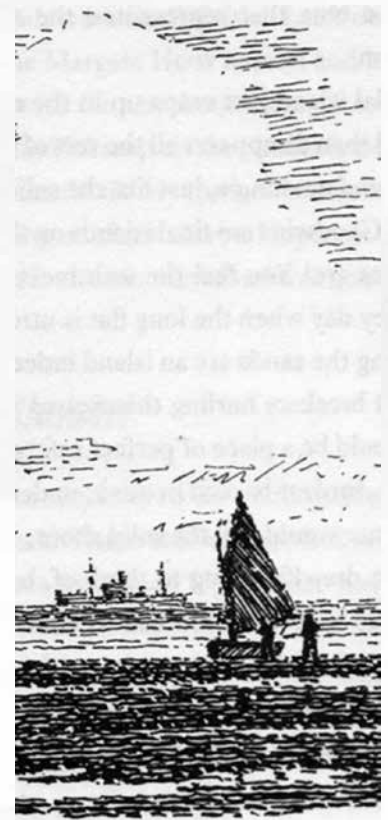
mosquitoes, and for the time we succeeded. the noise of the oars and the sound of our voices seemed unnatural and made us feel strange. So dead did everything about us appear that we almost doubted if we were alive.

But when morning came we awoke to a full sense of our being and supplied ourselves with what was necessary to carry us through a morning's sail. Then we began our journey through intricate windings, and at last arrived at Townsend's Inlet, where we fell in with a large tubby catboat that gave us a merry race for several hours. Once we led her into bad ways and she grounded on a bar that our shallow draught let us over easily. For a while she hung close to us, but being a poor hand at tacking, we left her well behind by the time we reached Leaming Sound, where we were unfortunately stranded for an hour or two waiting for the tide to rise, and in the meantime the wind strengthened so that we had to reef down, which makes slow work of beating against the tide. Shortly after leaving the Sound we came to a broad thoroughfare trending so much to the east that we could lay our course. But fortune did not favor us long, for we soon came to another turn and thereafter had to beat in the very teeth of the wind down a wide stream which opened out on Hinford Inlet, some four or five miles away. There was a choppy sea running and our boat pounded hard, keeping a continual shower of spray flying over us. We were soon drenched to the skin, our finger tips became white and shriveled, and our lips turned blue with cold. It was the acme of discomfort: everything was wet, and at every motion of the boat the water in the bottom slopped from side to side and spurted through the bottom boards. And for all our trouble we were not getting anywhere very fast, and when we reached the inlet, it was too dark to attempt to cross, so we examined the shore for a shelter. For a long distance there was not the smallest nook to put into and we had almost given up hope, when, right at the spot where the thoroughfare joined the inlet, we caught sight of a little hook of land covered with thick grass—exactly the haven for us. And with thankfulness in our hearts we ran through the grass to the shore. Our joints were like rusty hinges when we attempted to get up, but a little exercise soon limbered them. Now began the dreariest night of the cruise. We were certainly a disconsolate pair in our dripping clothes, and would have given all we owned just then to be able to strip and fall into a warm bed. But there was no such thing as a bed in that forsaken place way down on the tip of a desolate piece of beach, with no man

nearer than Anglesea, which lay across the inlet, excepting, perhaps, the guards at the government house we remembered passing some miles above. We moped around for a time, feeling not the least inclination to fix up our boat. But when finally we did bail her out and drew the bedding from under the stern, we found it not nearly so wet as we expected.

After this discovery we felt better, and when our cover was put up, the lantern lighted, and the coffee pot simmering on the oil stove, we felt truly comfortable for the first time in a good many hours and could enjoy the sound of the wind whistling through the rigging.

Such a sail as we had been through was very exhausting and we could scarcely keep awake long enough to finish our scanty supper before turning in. but our rest was not undisturbed, for about midnight a bad thunderstorm came out of the northwest and changed the direction of the wind, so that the rain blew through the open end of our cover. It did not amount to much, however, and we turned over and slept till almost morning, when we were aroused by a numerous and industrious band of mosquitoes. There was no rest in their presence, so we took our bucket, and crossing the island, strolled along the surf to the Life Saving Station, where we found the men at breakfast. They were only too glad to fill our buckets at the well, and



would have given us breakfast, too, if we had wanted it.

On our journey back we disturbed numbers of plover and willets that circled over the surf and lighted again a short distance further on. Before we left the beach we were driving a great bunch ahead of us. They were remarkably tame, too, so that we could get within easy gunshot distance. That is always the way when there is no gun handy.

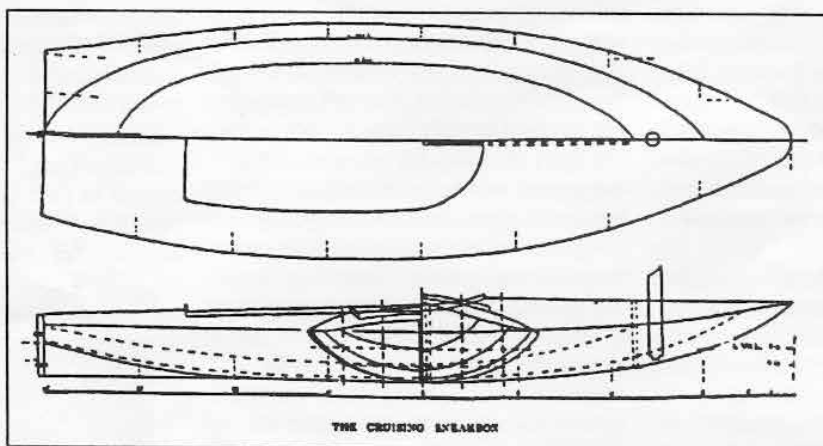
When we were ready to start the wind was blowing as hard from the north as it had blown from the south the day previous, so we kept in our reefs, and even that way toiled along at a rattling good pace, sliding down the big waves, and soon drew out of the inlet into a thoroughfare, and not far from the mouth of this was the last drawbridge that would worry us before we reached home. A short time after passing this obstruction we entered a maze of channels, bays and sounds that, for puzzling intricacy, outclassed all our previous experiences. And we decided that without a chart we might have wandered here forever and a day.

But the end was approaching, and if the wind held we could make Cold Spring Inlet by afternoon, where our difficulties with shallows and narrows would be over. The thought pleases us, and yet we had many misgivings about leaving our present shelter, and trusting ourselves to the tender mercies of the deep, and it made us shiver to think of the bar. Once in awhile we gave rein to the dark side of our imaginations and pictured ourselves with a huge sea bearing down on us having an appallingly hollow look on the near side, which would raise our bow and turn us end over end or would curl over and break just as it reached us and drop a ton or so of water on the boat. And after that if we were not killed directly we would go drifting seaward, and what would happen then we hated to think about. These fears disturbed our peace of mind not a little and we looked forward anxiously to the first sight of the dreaded inlet.

Shortly after twelve o'clock we entered the last thoroughfare--only a short one--and almost before we know it, we had jumped out into the inlet and there was the ocean

ahead of us shining under the bright sun, and on either hand were white sandy beaches looking delightfully clean after so long a spell of mud and meadow.

We sailed out the inlet, but merely to reconnoiter, for we had no intention of attempting the voyage round the Cape till the next day. The tide was low and in some places the bar lay uncovered. The breaking waves made a loop of foam from one shore to the other, to all appearances, continuous. The sight was disheartening, and we looked at each other with discouragement staring out of our eyes. But while we were in this situation a yacht left a pavillion on the opposite shore and stood out to sea and we followed in her wake. As we drew near the bar the waves became larger and larger, but most of them were even swells. Some distance from shore we caught sight of a tall pole apparently rising right out of the water.



We decided that it marked the end of the channel, so we knew turned round and headed for shore, but keeping our eyes on the yacht, we saw her lift and pitch nearly half out of the water as she was passing the stake, but beyond it she went along smoothly. We tried to persuade ourselves that it looked easy, but there was a feeling that still persisted in remaining which prevented perfect tranquillity.

We took a swim on reaching shore again and not long after sailed up a thoroughfare and put up for the night. Our sleep was not troubled with bad dreams, notwithstanding the care on our minds. When I awoke day had scarcely begun to break; numberless stars were still shining from the cloudless sky, and away down in the southeast I could see the lighthouse at Cape May. the wind was very faint, no more than enough to ripple the surface of the water and to set the tall reeds rustling on the bank, so we moved

at a snail's pace, and the sun caught us just creeping into the inlet. He came up radiant, making the white sand hills and the placid water fairly dazzling under his rays--the morning at least was auspicious. We turned into the inlet and crept slowly toward the bar, hanging as near shore as we dared, to escape the strong flood tide. The ocean lay before us and we each stood up to examine the prospect. Our hearts sank, for the bar looked more wicked than ever. The tide was high, and so the waves were much larger than on the day before; looked appalling rushing shoreward with their white curling crests, and we had half a mind to give up the undertaking several times. But we ventured on and on, ready to turn back if the seas began to break near us. We wished from the bottom of our hearts that there was just one boat at least in sight, or some human being who might come to our rescue in case we met

with a mishap, but nowhere was there a sign of life--the pavillion opposite lay as still as a picture.

We took all the precautions we could think of; brought everything of any weight from the bow and fastened a canvas hatch over the cockpit, then sat still and waited. The farther out we went, the

larger became the waves. We could keep our course in the channel by watching when they broke on either side of us. At last we caught sight of the spar buoy and headed for it, determined now to cross the bar or die in the attempt. We kept a sharp lookout for breakers ahead and often great seas started up in front of us, but we rode them all safely and were just ready to congratulate ourselves, when, as we came abreast the buoy, one, larger and steeper than the rest, bore down as if to ride right over us. I gulped something big in my throat and gripped the tiller, our bow climbed up and up till we thought we were going over backward, but in a moment we reached the top and were sinking down the other side. I could see Charlie's muscles relax and felt mine do the same. "Lucky that fellow didn't break," Charlie remarked, and I agreed with him, as I glanced at the back of the hurrying wall of water. That was the last of our dangers; we were over the bar.

Yesterday it was Feb-RU-rarry. Cold and dreary. Today it's March with sun and a whole lot cheery(er). The Summer of 2015 boating season starts today! Bungled rhyme notwithstanding, it's gonna be a full calendar of adventures and opportunities. The boys and girls of my modest fleet have been getting ready for months now. Time's a wastin'.

OK, just moment of rhetorical clarification. Sure, we all know that boats are girls. We call 'em she and stuff belonging to each she is properly labeled as "her" this or that. But there's certainly a male contingent involved. Like trailers and motors and trucks to pull all those girls around. Not misogynist, just equal opportunity. Anyhow.

I sort of instigated this little adventure coming up way back in November. Back when TO DO lists were free and easy. Back when the whole winter building season stretched gloriously ahead. Back before my hands hurt quite this much. Mostly back before I discovered how many things still have to be fixed, changed, modified and generally moved around before I can pull a floaty thing over the mountains, through Big City traffic and launch in a part of the Pacific Ocean known as South Puget Sound.

The cognocenti in charge of websites and such have called this evolution the South Sound Mini Cruise. Being of less refined stock, I refer to it as the Damn the Drizzle Cruise. Hey, we're going to the rain capital of the world, just about. So when I dreamed this thing up, the idea was to bring a boat "with a roof, windows and a heater." The relatively minor notion that I didn't exactly have one of those vessels quite ready, equipped or even properly designed for the conditions we may encounter didn't bother me too much. At the time, waaaaaaay back in November. Well, now here we are, just a week to go.



I've been putting on a third shift and offering overtime again. Except the working conditions haven't been all that swell. Seems the boat selected for this first cruise of the new season sits too tall on her trailer to get back inside the shop. We're talkin' waaaaaayyy too tall, in fact. Like I said, anything seemed possible eons ago in November. So things like pulling trailer wheel hubs, installing electric brakes, shifting rollers and all that stuff that doesn't even bother a guy much in July, gets a bit frisky working outside with snow still on the ground. But we all got our troubles, and yours are probably worse than mine.

And another minor irritation. I went out looking for a place to do a sea trial. I thought it might make sense to know if the boat in question was going to display a propensity to sink or turn turtle before embarrassing myself in public with such malapropiate behavior.

Damn the Drizzle Cruise

By Dan Rogers



So, I went down to the local open all winter ramp. When I say down, I mean DOW-WNNNNNN. Seems the folks that run things around here have pulled all the plugs. Even if I wanted to back down that local version of San Francisco's Lombard Street (of Steve McQueen marque), there wasn't enough wet stuff between the cold air above and the cold mud below. So much for sea trials.

Well, on to getting things done. There's something else decidedly female about boats. Maybe you've noticed? They don't really like to share. Nope. And that's a problem with some of us who only have so many life jackets, spare tires, swing stoves and such like that to go around. I have to borrow and shift stuff all the time. For example, trailer tires.

All I said to *Strumpet* was something like, "Hey, since little sister gets to go to the party, and since you don't, could she borrow your new shoes?"



I'm pretty sure my pinched finger and smacked knee was purely accidental. And the fact that the fender wells didn't fit, or the older tires, one of which suddenly failed to hold air, was pure circumstance. Now the spare that came from *Old Salt* and the canoe paddle and tea pot from *Lady Bug* also seemed to require some sort of flinch and cuss words to obtain, along with a bunch of other stuff. But I've been pretty clumsy lately.



Oh yeah, I did find a place with water to sort of test things. By then it was getting dark, and cold(er), so I tried a sort of fast cruise on the trailer. And that was probably a good thing. Seems the drain plug had lost its grip. But at least I think we'll find a way to get from trailer to salt water in a more or less efficient manner.

Both motors started. And there was only one leak of any consequence. Hey, we're getting there. But I gotta go get some electric brake assemblies and coax my knees to the pavement for a few hours of quality time out in the driveway. See ya later.

The Day the Music Died

There are lots of things better discovered in your own driveway. A couple of those popped up today and were pretty big game changers, I'm afraid. First off, it was sup-



posed to be a pretty straightforward task. Pull trailer wheels, pull hubs and brake drums, replace brake backing plates with electric units, reassemble. The biggest deal was supposed to be the trip to the Big City for parts.



Well, when this starts looking like this, up close things stop being simple.

Somehow about \$100 became over five times that much in about two seconds of inspection. The whole axle needs to be replaced, along with bearings, brakes. The works. There's even a press fit bearing brace that has to be frozen into place. Well, what else can go wrong?

I was still figuring that I'd figure it out. Somehow. This sharing among the girls had gotten pretty far out with tires and stuff like that. Now I was gonna have to swap trailers. Not a real big deal. I've done it a bunch of times. Well maybe, before I do that, it would make sense to make sure everything else is gonna work out. Maybe?



So, running down the checklist, I figured it would be a good idea to run both motors for a while. Just in case.

And, in keeping with the situation, you'll probably guess. Yep. Old Faithful chose that particular moment to both blow his water pump to smithereens, but also blew the two stroke outboard equivalent of the rear main seal on a car. Neat, huh?

Sooooooooo, at this point I was beginning to lose interest in continuing with such stuff. And since one axle is bad, who knows how many others are also. I went over to storage

and hooked *Lady Bug* up. Her trailer axles looked OK when I pulled the hubs. So, other than the stuff I haven't fixed from our collision with a rock pile last November, she's looking like a good candidate for the cruise. Other than no roof, no windows and there's not much a heater can do in an open cockpit anyhow. Other than that. Oh yeah. And the iddy biddy cabin space is about as big as the glove compartment on a Volkswagen. And we are talking about taking a several day trip in that little spit kit. With probably crummy weather.

Don't get me wrong, I don't completely object to standing with my head out of the hatch to pull my pants up, as well as completing several other "personal" tasks. But this is a major comedown from standing headroom, and walkin' around space.

But wait. It gets better.



Then it started to snow. Pretty hard, in fact. This boat collection in the driveway was looking like it needed to be someplace else. *Roughneck* got returned to storage and, suddenly, my primary candidate for this Damn-the Drizzle trip was quite significantly sidelined with major injuries.



Within about the next 30 minutes visibility had dropped to about 100'. And now, there's about 5" of the stuff on *Lady Bug*'s deck.



Sometimes it's important to remember that "plan" is a four letter word. And I take it on good authority that if you want to make God smile, all you gotta do is make plans. Well, that's about the long and the short of it.

In my own pointy headed way, I considered the odds, made lists of things that for sure needed to be checked, fixed and outright done over. I thought about things that I can't control, like weather and if people would even come to this sort of eccentric event that I was trying to drum up interest in. So here I sit rather well chastened. If I had left everything to the last minute, to chance and to dumb luck, I'd be in about the same boat, as it were.

Yep. Just like old times. My good old road warrior van, *Big Ole*, will pull good old *Lady Bug*, the peripatetic pocket cruiser of a thousand launches and recoveries all over the western half of this country. *Quiet Quigley, Junior*, son of the late *QQ*, will carry *Miss Bug* in fine style, I'm quite certain. We're all some years older than when we were out travelling all over the place. We've all had injuries, infirmities and insults heaped upon us. But we did it before. We can do it now.

And just as soon as the sun melts this snow off her deck, I'm gonna hop up and see just how many year old PBJs are left in the galley locker, what sort of small animals may have taken up residence in the linen locker and whether that six year old deep cycle battery can be convinced to climb down by itself and go into retirement peacefully. Well, I could always hope.

Time's a wastin' and we've got work to do. Plans to make. Well, let's just stick with the work part, for now.

When I called Kate to the back door again and asked her to bring the box of bandaids and maybe a paper towel again, she had two rather legitimate questions.

First, "Why don't you come inside?" Well. Around this house it's considered bad form to get blood on the hardwood floors. OK.

Second, "Isn't there a message here?" Well probably. Either I'm really not supposed to take this boat trip that has required soooooo many repair parts, tools and aching joints to get ready, or I'm just supposed to EARN IT. For the moment I'll go with the latter. About one more disaster and I'll maybe consider another course of non action. Anyhow.

Everybody who has ever called a boat their own has certainly stalled off on doing this or that task as simply "TOO HARD." Well, I had one of those today. And, at face value, it just couldn't be too hard. Three bolts, three nuts. One small aluminum angle thingie part. A couple of drill holes, one 1/2", the other about 3/8" give or take. Yep. That's it.



Except those bolts and nuts and other parts have been dipped in and out of both fresh and salt water off an on for about 30 years, give or take. There are about five or seven coats of paint interspersed with rust and road gunk. And the best part, while I can actually see the articles in question, they are somewhat difficult to get to.



Waaaayyyyy down under about 1,500lbs pounds of boat, if I put my sternum on the supporting bracket for the catwalk that is fastened to the fender and stick my head in the 6" clearance gap and reach waaaaayyyyy back in there, I can actually put my hand on the "spot."

It looks sort of like this. Actually, that's what it looks like, now that I got it fixed. A few hours back, things were more like a broken wing, dangling rather accusingly.

All it took was a breaker bar, pipe wrench, several deep and shallow sockets of various denominations, a nail puller bar, sawzall with extra-long metal cutting blade, floor jack, "custom lifting appliance," a full lexicon of cuss words and, yes, several bandaids.



This is more like the view of the scene of the crime, to the actual participants. About 1.5 arm lengths beyond any decent place to kneel. Anyhow.

This is my comeuppance for sort of towing *Lady Bug* over a mud flat on her side while using the trailer as a sort of fulcrum for the tow strap. At any rate, I have a whole new appreciation for the adhesive qualities of mild steel held in close proximity with

aluminum and asked to play well with salt water from time to time. You could say they become "fast friends" from the experience.

Suffice it to say, "We are substantially ready." I'm out of time and will simply take it as it comes. More or less. This event that I instigated way back last fall is upon us. The venue is about 400 road miles away for me. The expected boats range from a 45' classic woodie motor vessel down to an open rowing wherry. There are a few Michalak's in the mix, a Bolger or two, even another stock fiberglass sloop or more.

The idea is to meet up at a launch ramp near a bridge crossing south Puget Sound to an island that has a cove at the north end with moorage and camping facilities. That particular rendezvous is several days hence. It's been unseasonably warm and dry hereabouts and "over there" for the past several days. Of course, there's rain in the forecast. Of course. Hopefully there won't be late season snow in the pass for me and my wagon train to negotiate. I've allowed several days to make the drive and the water transits in order to meet up with folks who have "planned" to attend. Perhaps that will all work out. Hope it will. Come sunup, the preparations end. The voyage begins. After that? Well, I guess we'll see.

I was sitting in a truck park someplace between Vantage and George. The wind was howling, and my little wagon train was bucking and jouncing on its springs. I had my last pair of almost dry socks on. Willie and Waylon were serenading me on a small town country oldies station. I was down to a couple of hundred miles from home on a week-long, 850 mile odyssey. Just about everything about this trip had gone wrong, counter to the plan, even the weatherman had got just about every prognostication wrong. I had serious mechanical troubles that took a serious time delay and serious cash to remedy. It had rained an inch over the prior record for that day in a place that is just about the rain capital of the country. The light winds forecast had manifested into a maelstrom against the ebb tide. It was dark, cold and windy up there on the back side of the Cascade mountains. Unless I wanted to dig wet sails, a clammy sleeping bag, sodden mattress and whatnot out of *Lady Bug's* cabin up on that rocking and reeling trailer first, I was gonna have to settle for the ramen noodles and instant coffee I could lay my hands on in the van. Simply put, life was good!

A small boat event that I had instigated months before had not only come together, it was by most accounts a resounding success.



A total of six boats had attended the first annual Drizzle Cruise in South Puget Sound. We came from far and near, to gather on the rain slicked state park dock in Jarrell Cove, Harstine Island. Originally billed as a pocket yacht event, half the boats came on their own

bottoms from full time moorings. The other half came by trailer.



What resulted was a marvelous synergy, a grand opportunity to meet new folks and get to know them. Sometimes huddled under a tarp. Sometimes not.

Our assemblage spanned boat history, size and design spreads in the most eclectic fashion imaginable.



James and Tim brought the venerable 1927 motor yacht *El Mystico* from Shelton.



David and his dog Max were at anchor aboard their full time residence, *Harold*, and waiting for the rest of us to arrive.



Tom brought his spiffy Ericson 27, *Reset*, the farthest distance (by water) from Gig Harbor.



Dennis showed up with his peripatetic *Scram Pram* from Burnaby, British Columbia.



The Other Tom made the party after a couple of attempts to motor from the west central side of the island in a southerly direction to reach the north end. *Loafer* is a Bolger Old Shoe. Donations accepted to help buy Tom a new Boy Scout compass and maybe a Boy Scout to operate it for him.



And I brought my well travelled *Lady Bug* from the still snowy northeast corner of the state.



The only boat to brave the breezy conditions in Jarrell Cove during a break in the clouds, *Lady Bug* still knows her stuff, but the skipper was a bit stiffer, and less agile, than in years gone by.

We had a delightful campfire the first night in port. Tim demonstrated how a true Scout Master builds and lights a fire. Several times. And when he finally got a blaze roaring, the smores sticks had also disappeared. Stories, tall tales and outright lies swirled with the smoke until bedtime and the first patters of rain called an end to the party. After that, it was a night of the “flat cow raining on a pee rock” until well into what should have been sunrise.



This is the view from *Lady Bug's* rather cramped companionway. The polytarp and plumbing pipe “awning” was more or less an afterthought, created in the Lowe’s parking lot while leaving Spokane. I’m soooooo glad I had it. It made what could have been pretty yucky conditions in that little floating fiberglass pup tent into pretty darn comfortable. Well, except for the spurting leak that developed exactly over my ear. What an “interesting” way to wake up at zero dark thirty.

Somehow we idled and chatted our way through Friday and Saturday. The park ranger came by to collect our dock fees and told us about a once a year oyster feed at the local grange hall. While we could probably have hit the place with a well aimed skipping stone from the pier, the walk was a bit more circuitous. The ensuing meal and gam were well worth both the money price and the walking. The grange hall has been standing on that spot since 1914, the year World War I began 100 years ago. And I must say the ol’ place looks a lot better than most of the rest of us will look at 100.

Another night of intermittent rain, drizzle and downright deluge. The Other Tom had already decided it was time to hyakko

for home on Saturday. Somewhat true to the modus of this event, he had car trouble on the way from ramp to home and waited much of the day for a tow truck to find and rescue him. We could offer encouragement by phone but nobody had any way to go meet up with him. He probably should have stayed for the oysters, huh?

The party broke up on Sunday morning to the backdrop of forecasts for heavy rain, gale force winds against the strong ebb and otherwise less than satisfactory conditions for sun bathing. Tom and *Reset* had possibly the worst of it. It’s a 30 mile point to point run for him in a boat with a flatwater speed close to a brisk walk in the park. What he ran into was anything but a walk in the park! With an inflatable dink in tow and rain blowing sideways, he had his bow anchor slip its chocks in the Tacoma Narrows. Gusts blowing above 40mph had pushed the outgoing tide into quite the confused and breaking stuff that stretch is known for. The bad news is there wasn’t anybody there to get pictures of Tom out on the bow alternately diving under water and lurching for the sky, retrieving a Danforth on chain rode before it managed to anchor him just where he would never want to be anchored.

Reset went on the hard the next morning for her previously scheduled annual haulout, looking pert and none the worse for wear. The skipper has a tale to relate at our next campfire, for sure!



Dennis and I had a most remarkable chain of happenings that same morning. We got to the ramp and hauled out without much untoward stuff. Wet, wet, wet. But, boats float on top and sailors dry out.

Along comes a gent with an unfinished 9’ Minto in tow. My own *Limerick* is a 1976 version of this iconic faux clinker dinghy cum pocket Whitehall. There we were standing in the rain (a la, “Only mad dogs and Englishmen stand in the mid day sun...”) talking about boats and getting wetter by the rain drop. Kurt, the Minto Man, pointed out that he had been looking for us. He had seen the *Scram Pram* pass on the highway the previous Friday when we came up from Olympia. He found us by way of this or that forum or website and then made a point of laying a converging course. Wow, huh!



It took very little to convince all hands that there are better places for a gam than a very rainy launch ramp parking lot. Kurt knew about a roadside bar 'n grill someplace between Harstine bridge and Shelton.

About then, Tom would be entering the Narrows. James and Tim would be putting *El Mystico* to bed in her boathouse at the head of Hammersly Inlet in Shelton, the Other Tom would be fixing his car, David and Max would be re anchoring *Harold* in her accustomed spot near Shelton. Dennis was on his way home to Vancouver, British Columbia.

Yours truly had a windy and wet climb over the pass and on home to Diamond Lake, here in Almostcanada. Time to park *Lady Bug* for a while and get the next boat ready for the next event.

Life is good!

Epilog

This is sort of one of those stories about having to laugh at myself. After all that has transpired in this lengthy tale of pursuing a dream and now being safely back home, I learn that starting tomorrow, or maybe it's tonight, we're gonna have rain and some snow and maybe then the weather will start getting ugly. Tomorrow is that equinoctial event so often rhapsodized about in rhyme with words like "blossom" and "a young man's fancy" and "soft and balmy, fragrant breeze." Stuff like that. The rain chance is a full 100%. The snow chance is a bit less.

So I thought today would be an excellent day to sort of see if I could get part of my chips back on the winning side of the table. Yeah, right. I thought it would be just a cool thing to hook ol' *Lady Bug* up to ol' *Big Ole* and go down to the ol' launching ramp. Maybe go sailing. A novel concept, sure. Of course, I had to drop off that trailer spare that refused to hold air on the trip over the mountains and through the rain. And I had to stop and get an estimate on more repairs for the van. Nothing's too good for a 23 year old truck with a quarter million odoes on his odometer. There were a few more stops. But then I was off and running for the launch ramp. We're going sailing.

You know how there's that little voice that says, "no you ain't?" Yeah, that voice. Welllllll, anyway, here I was, good ol' Joe Btzflk under his black cloud with my trusty sailboat at the ramp, getting ready to launch said SAILboat. And then, put up those SAILS. And go SAILing. Just what the doc ordered. Except in a fit of orderliness and organization when I got home from that trip in the rain, I put the sails up in the loft with the idea that *Lady Bug* was gonna get stored for a while and I'd work on other projects. The only thing that would make orderliness and organization a bit more useful? A similar facility for REMEMBERING when I do stuff like that.



And, after breakfast, we followed him through the muck and flotsam about another 30 miles to his shop in Olympia. And that was well worth the trip! In more or less continuous production since 1965, the little Minto dinghy is now in the capable hands of her fifth artisan. Kurt also repairs big boats and builds the more eclectic craft in this sawdust palace. What a grand place to turn trees and polyester into works of art, huh?



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How Farmland Impacts Our Waters

Sixty years ago Iowa's topsoil was black, luxuriant and 2' thick, exuding an earthy smell that simply reeked of richness. That soil could nurture anything. Farmers could easily grow corn, oats, hay, soybeans, rye, wheat, barley and occasionally sorghum. The farmers learned to rotate crops so the land could renew itself, and they learned how to plant to avoid erosion.

Today, Iowa's farms look significantly different. No longer are oats, rye, wheat or barley grown, instead the fields are simply corn and soybeans. The dirt is light brown and mostly clay. Few, very few, farms have livestock of any sort. Dairy farming has disappeared except for factory farms that milk over 1,000 cattle per day, all regulated by computers and robotics so that the best producers can be handled three times per day vs the standard twice a day. Hogs are raised in hog lots of thousands that can be smelled beyond the horizon.

In the 1950s farmers could generate about 40-50 bushels of corn per acre at a about \$3 per bushel. Today, with the topsoil all gone, farmers can expect at least 150 bushels per acre with a price at about \$3.50. The reason is chemical. With genetic seeds, chemical fertilizer, insecticides and herbicides, folks can grow corn on concrete. Corn is used in production of corn syrup that is used in everything from Cokes to Corn Flakes. Corn is used to make ethanol for fuels. Corn is made for starch. Midwest Corn is what King Cotton was to the South.

Where has Iowa's topsoil gone? Just look at a chart of the mouth of the Mississippi off Louisiana. A dead zone where no plant or fish life exists stretches 50 miles into the Gulf of Mexico. Shallow water and shoals are everywhere that once was deep water. It is in that dead zone that resides Iowa's topsoil, insecticides, herbicides and genetically altered seeds.

Our greed has created a huge ecological hole that probably can never be reversed. To add to our self inflicted wound is the massive proliferation of oil wells that leak, spill and burst. The BP "spill" of a few years ago not only destroyed tourist businesses along the Gulf Coast, it killed aquatic life, birds, mammals and plants from Texas to Florida. As late as last year tar balls from the BP "accident" could be found in Tampa Bay and along Florida's Sun Coast.

One of the results was the destruction of the shrimp fleets. Look at the shrimp and frozen fish at the grocery store. Virtually all of it comes from China and Southeast Asia because they can catch, freeze and transport it to the US cheaper than the American fishermen can supply them. China and Company proffers very low wages, virtually no regulations on catch limits, safety and pollution. Our fishermen cannot compete. Worse, the BP desecration of our waterways hit at the same time the economy bottomed out. Shrimpers literally gave their boats away because they could not pay for slip rentals. Between Asian competition and pollution, their livelihood disappeared.

Big River News

Polk County and the city of Des Moines are suing upriver counties for failure to eliminate phosphorus and nitrates from their runoffs making the well water for over 250,000 people poisonous. Rural counties have been exempted from The Clean



Beyond the Horizon

By Stephen D.
(Doc) Regan

Water Act, thus they have been allowed to dump toxins that drain into the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers, requiring Iowa's capital city to spend money it doesn't have to make their drinking water even minimally safe. Congress has consistently ignored rural runoff and pollution concerns.

At an agricultural meeting in Des Moines, seven Republican presidential hopefuls gave speeches trying to impress the "First in the Nation Caucus" state. All seven stated that they would seek to overturn the Clean Water Act under the belief that clean water is a state's responsibility and Federal intrusion is in violation of a conservative interpretation of the Constitution.

While the boys were pushing their agendas in Des Moines, 11 railroad tank cars carrying crude oil derailed near Galena, Illinois. Two or three erupted in flames, forcing the immediate evacuation of everyone within a mile radius. Illinois DNR has been working diligently attempting to keep leaking oil from entering the river or from damaging land areas.

Thirteen suburban cities in the Minneapolis/St Paul area want clean water and believe that drawing water from the Mississippi river or the Prairie du Chien-Jordan aquifer is not safe, nor adequate for public consumption. They propose the raising of White Bear Lake water levels for their needs. This will cost of \$600 million to create and \$20 million per year to operate. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources claims that the suburbs are taking too much water from the aquifer and suggests that conservation and reclamation is the correct response.

Up the road, St Cloud, Minnesota, requested grant money to assist in cleanup costs from storm sewer water that runs into the Mississippi river. St Cloud's industrial park runoffs have added significant amounts of sediment to the river and the city needs to reduce this by 15.

No less a personage than the former CEO of Cargill, Greg Page, voiced deep concerns over climate changes and specifically global warmth that, he maintains, will reduce corn and wheat production by up to 69%. Page challenged readers of the Risky Business Project to develop new strategies for coping with and reducing influences on climate change. Page, former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg and former US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson are attempting to organize joint government/corporate efforts to mitigate climate change due to human impact.

And Aimed Directly at Small Boaters...

Recently reported mandates by the Minnesota DNR to force all boaters and even boaters with boats on trailers coming across the state line to complete an online course on pollution and have displayed stickers noting completion of the course hit a major snag from tourist groups. The mandate was remanded for further study.

About Pollution Elsewhere

A Bangladesh oil spill caused by a collision between a cargo ship and a tanker has done stupendous damage to the fragile area of the Subdurbans, the world's largest contiguous mangrove forest and home of an incredible array of plants and animals including two rare species of dolphins and the endangered Bengal tiger.

Several environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, filed suit against the Port of Seattle for leasing a terminal for the Royal Dutch Shell Arctic oil drilling fleet. The coalition cited that the required proper environmental review never occurred. The group further noted that the current usage of the terminal was significantly different than that cited originally in the lease. Additional complaints were filed against Foss Maritime Co for signing documents without mandated public disclosure, and that Foss could potentially be a polluter of the water. Attorneys claimed that the Port Authority bypassed laws and shut out the public to avoid controversial concerns.

Royal Dutch Shell, which happens to be the largest energy company in Europe, has every intention of restarting its prior Arctic drilling campaign in Chukchi Sea, Alaska, during this upcoming summer. It had been previously suspended back in early 2013 after a drilling rig grounding. Shell had previously contracted Noble Corp Plc for terminal work but the US Department of Justice filed felony charges for safety and environmental violations, inadequate record keeping on vessels sailing in Arctic waters. The company agreed to a \$12.2 million fine.

About Lifeboats

Lifeboats are supposed to be just that, boats that can save your life, however, recent events have suggested they can do the opposite. Norway is investigating the fall of a lifeboat from an oil rig in the North Sea. Evidently the boat fell when a support wire holding it in place broke. The boat then plummeted to the sea and was swept under the rig, causing modest damage. The Norwegian Petroleum Safety Authority is rather concerned by the lack of proper maintenance, security and overall damage of lifeboats on oil rigs. The UK is also expressing concern about over 400 lifeboats that fail to meet simple requirements. Worse, there is general European apprehension about design flaws in these boats.

Free fall lifeboats are supposed to allow enclosed workers to immediately jettison off an exploding or fire engulfed rig. Unfortunately investigations have discovered that many of these boats will not survive a fall from that height. Also, studies indicate that the people inside these boats may be seriously injured or killed in such an evacuation. Studies also suggest that on a large fire, crews may not have the amount of time necessary to evacuate the rig via free fall boats.

Interestingly, these issues have been debated for over a decade. Oil companies have been slow to react to these concerns and countries have limited jurisdiction in these cases. The International Association of Drilling Contractors placed safety on the front burner. Actually, it has been on the front burner since 2005.

Accidents

A fire in the hold of the ro-ro cargo vessel *Ocean Queen* required assistance of the Korean Coast Guard in March 2015. Neither the cause

of the fire or the extent of it was known publicly. The owners, Brazilians, claimed no injuries or pollution in the incident.

A sailboat lost control in high winds and slammed into the ferry *Queenscliff* off Australia near the Sow and Pigs reef. The yacht could not alter course with the reef off her portside. The video of the collision looked incredibly life threatening, however, the sailboat managed to remain upright and her crew was unharmed, as was the ferry. The ferry crew immediately mobilized to provide assistance and issued a distress call and everything ended up fine.

A Bangladesh ferry sank killing 69 in one of the worst ferry accidents in a country noted for ferry accidents. The cargo ship *MV Mostapha* that collided with the ferry was held responsible and the captain arrested. Hit soon after departure, the ferry instantly capsized, trapping most of the passengers inside. About 50 people on deck were able to swim to shore. Since Bangladesh does not require passenger lists, there is no accurate count of people on board.

Other Stuff

The Chinese cargo ship *Da Dan Xia* was detained and its captain arrested in Columbia when the cargo manifest did not match the items in the hold. The ship was actually carrying weaponry, munitions and explosives bound for Cuba but the manifest claimed it was carrying grain. Captain Wu Hong was arrested for illegally transporting weapons, according to Luiz Gonzalez, national director of the Attorney General's office. The ship was also impounded.

Floridians underwent a horrendous fog in February that caused a pile of problems. One fishing boat with four 300hp motors became lost in the Gulf of Mexico and her captain did what all good captains do when they are lost and can't seem to figure out their electronics, he opened the throttle and headed due east, figuring that sooner or later he'd find Florida.

He did. In fact, he hit the beach rather quickly, skipped across the sand like a stone on water and implanted himself, his boat and passengers in the middle of a café, collapsing the café's roof, scattering chairs and tables and destroying a large hunk of foundation. Police speculate he found seating arrangements at about 50mph. Remarkably

no one was seriously hurt but the boat was destroyed and the restaurant closed for significant repair, while the legal situation of the captain remains unresolved.

Cruise Ship Concerns

The same fog caused some unhappiness among cruise ship passengers. The entry to Tampa Bay is fairly small with the landmass of St Petersburg only a mile across a narrow channel from Egmont Key, which lies less than a mile from the Florida mainland. Obvious to any person who has ever walked around at Fort De Soto or taken a boat to Egmont, the commercial channel is very narrow. The fog caused cruise ships in the Gulf to remain outside the bay because of risk of grounding or collision. It also required ships ready to depart to delay their voyages.

The area TV stations couldn't get enough phone time with irate people who were "stuck" on ships in the Gulf and needed to be ashore immediately because the economy and well being of the world depended on their presence. Demanding their captains immediately head to the nearest pier, these vocal folks insisted on full refund of the cruise, damages for suffering and business loss and additional money to offset their emotional trauma.

These poor people awaiting embarkation were perturbed and commanded immediate discounts on their costs, free drinks in cocoanuts with piles of fruit not found in a Winn Dixie, paper umbrellas and vouchers for free cruises in the future. They angrily claimed their vacations ruined because they could only stay for an hour in Cozumel instead of the cited two hours, their lives negatively altered because of the fog and their time so precious that the world should change to fit their requirements.

For anyone who thought cruises were a means of relaxation and free time are sadly mistaken or have not taken a cruise in recent years. Today's cruise ship is something akin to Disneyland afloat replete with on ship water parks, sundry bands making music for all ages and tastes on each deck, an itinerary that makes Cook's voyage look like a row around a pond and stops at company owned islands that resemble aforementioned Disneyland. Relaxation is nigh on impossible because every single minute is supposed to be occupied in some activity. The reason for a cruise is dawn to dusk involvement in some-

thing. No wonder passengers are all frenetically wound springs of neurosis.

Gray Fleets

The US Navy is continuing to worry about China and the South China Seas after China warned all other nations to avoid provocative maneuvers or developing problems in the region. As expected, other Southeast Asian countries point fingers at China, claiming that China is assuming the role of bully in the region, and the US sees the region as a naval hotspot ready to explode. The Defense Department analysts asked the DOD to create a series of reports on concerns and expectations for the seas around China. Those experts ascertain that neither DOD nor the Navy are prepared for sudden escalation of issues.

The Coast Guard requested funding for six additional ice breakers ranging from medium to heavy duty ships. Because of shrinking ice caps and greatly increasing shipping in icy waters, the Coast Guard claims that they have far more need to open icy waters than they have ships available to do so. They are probably the fifth or sixth little calf wanting succor from Big Mama in Washington. With the Navy demanding more ships and the Marine Corp showing need for more men and equipment, the Coast Guard has little inhouse support in Congress and even less support in the White House.

Rare Species

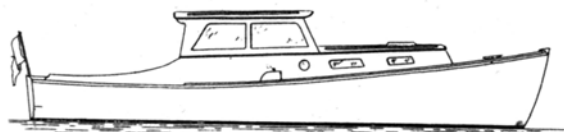
Alaskan authorities discovered a turtle smuggling scheme at the Ted Stevens airport in Anchorage. Some 200 rare or protected species were found hidden in luggage. Included among the turtles were Blanding's turtles, Wood turtles, loggerhead musk turtles, diamondback terrapins, box turtles and Kwangtung River turtles. This cargo was headed to China where turtle soup is very popular. Many Chinese also believe that turtle meat alleviates kidney problems.

The little hatchlings are currently incubating at the Dubuque National Mississippi River aquarium but will eventually be taken to appropriate sites in New York, Florida, Connecticut, Alabama, Texas, South Carolina and Iowa. The Center for Biological Diversity estimates that over two million American endangered turtles are sent to China each year.

Are humans the only species that are hell bent on committing self extermination?

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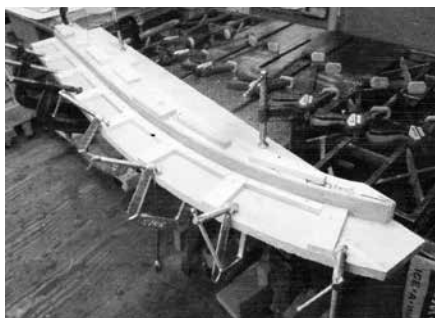
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Robertson Project Progress

Photos by Steve Lapey

In January we scheduled a shop session for the Robertson that will be our donation to the 2015 WCHA auction at Paul Smith's. Unfortunately the weather didn't cooperate and we were experiencing snow showers all morning. New member Michael Clarke was the only one brave enough to travel to Groveland for the event, so the show went on as planned, even though we were shorthanded. Dan Lapey didn't have far to travel so he joined the work party.

First on the agenda was the steam bending of the new outwales. The mahogany had been milled and cut to length at a previous session, the stock had been soaking for almost a week and appeared ready to go. There were three pieces of mahogany made up, port, starboard and a spare, the plan called for bending one end of all three at once.



Bending fixture for the outwales.

Twenty minutes of steam seemed about right, we pulled the wood out of the steam tube and started clamping and bending in the fixture that was waiting. All went well, no cracks or splits and with the careful application of clamps the job was done. This takes care of one end of the 'wales, at another session we will bend the other ends.



Dan Lapey and Michael Clarke with the outwales, bent and clamped. We always need plenty of clamps in a canoe shop!

Once the bending was done and the outwales set aside to remain clamped in the fixture for a few days, the next item on the agenda was to get a first coat of enamel on the hull. For this canoe we have chosen Kirby's 47 "C" Green which is very close to the original color that we found traces of under the keel. Michael was chosen to do the application of the paint, the rolling and tipping procedure was new to him but he mastered

Norumbega Chapter WCHA News

By Steve Lapey

Reprinted from the Norumbega Chapter
WCHA Newsletter

the technique in a few minutes and shortly we had what appears to be a perfect coat of paint, no drips, no runs and no errors!



Rolling and tipping is the route to a nice paint job on our canoe. Michael Clarke makes it look easy.

Now with the first coat of paint on, the canvas can be trimmed and at the next gathering we can plan on bending the other end of the new outwales, installing the new outside stems and the keel. After that we will be on the home stretch. There is still one seat to bolt in, the rail caps will have to be fitted and nailed down (they don't require steaming). There will be some sanding and staining to do and then the final varnish and paint. There should be no problem having this project done for the July Assembly.

Member's Winter Projects

Alan Doty's New 16' Prospector

Alan Doty has completed construction of a new 16' Prospector, to use on Norumbega trips among other events. The strip built Prospector was made from a Clark Craft kit with assistance from Merton's Fiberglass in Springfield, Massachusetts. Alan added some real American chestnut accent strips in the middle and the bottom of the hull and lining handles forward and aft.

Build time was a total of ten weeks, there were a few glitches with the onset of cold weather and no heat in the barn. As this was the choice design of the Maine sporting camps, it was Alan's choice to build this in cedar strip/epoxy to lighten the canoe while maintaining its traditional design.



Roger Andrews'

Courting Canoe Progress Report

Roger acquired a courting canoe last summer, planning on making it his first canoe restoration project. Roger has made great

progress. The fiberglass was removed and all of the woodwork was done last summer. In the fall the interior was varnished and the canvas was stretched and stapled. In November the filler went on and now it is ready for the finish work. The original decks are in good enough shape that they can be re-used as can the thwart. Roger has not yet announced what the colors or the paint scheme will be, but rest assured it will be pretty. Roger is pictured with the courting canoe with the canvas stretched and stapled. Notice how bright the shop is with windows all around.



Greg Nolan and the 50 Pounder

Greg Nolan has recently retired and is spending more time in Maine where he has set up shop to catch up on the restoration projects that he has saved up. He shares this report with us on his progress:

"This past summer I started a full restoration of our Old Town 50 pounder, the one that had the Easter egg paint job, after five seasons of use in spite of several cracked ribs, split planking and battered gunwales. Now the canvas is off and the interior is largely stripped of its varnish (still needs one more pass). This is my first restoration, I have done various and sundry repairs and improvements over the years so I had to build a steam box and had to learn some aspects of restoration just by doing them, including the bending of inwales.

"An article in *WoodenBoat* magazine about using polyethylene tubing instead of a steam box piqued the interest of both Fitz and me and, after a bit of discussion, I said I would split the cost and material if Fitz would find a source and order it.

"After a bit of trial and error, I did get the two inwales bent and they have held their shape well for the last few months, I chose ash rather than the original spruce for the inwales because the originals were a lot worse for wear (from the previous owners), and I figured a couple of pounds was a good tradeoff for more durability.

"I learned that a wallpaper removing steamer does not generate enough steam for bending long strips like gunwales all at once because the steam cools too quickly as it travels the full length of the tube and, as a result, I now have a propane fired turkey fryer for future attempts.

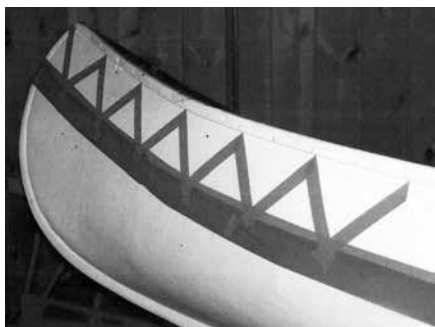
"I have also acquired a derelict 17' Morris, Model A, Type 3, serial number 11021 (circa 1915), but a few other canoes are in line for restoration first.

"Working on my wife's video, *Contemporary Canoe Builders and Their Work*, has absorbed a large amount of time that I thought would be free after retirement (I've been busier in retirement than when working). A rough cut was shown at last summer's Assembly but with further editing and tech-

nical refinement, that project is near the end. We are now distributing copies to those who participated in the video and sending the rest to the WCHA online store for sale (\$10.00 plus shipping)."



Crossing a Beaver Dam near Onowa Lake.



Learning how to lay out triangles, and how old cracked paint never actually gets hidden under new paint.



Steaming the second inwale; the first inwale, steamed and bent the previous day is clamped to the old inwale and drying.

Projects in the Fitzgerald Canoe Shop Text and Photos: John Fitzgerald

It was a busy 2014 season in the driveway of my shop. Early in the year, I spent time replacing wood trim on several fiberglass canoes. This usually involves replacement of the gunwales, decks, seats and thwarts after the canoe has sat rotting in someone's backyard. It doesn't take very long to do and the canoes end up looking like new when they are done, so I am calling it a worthwhile endeavor. Here are a few photographs.

A Stowe Mansfield canoe which needed new decks, gunwales, thwarts and paint.



A fiberglass Nova Craft canoe that needed all new wood trim and seats. The canoe went on a trip on the Allagash this summer just after completion.



A fiberglass White canoe which required new gunwales, decks and paint. The lines of this canoe match the old wood and canvas E.M. White Guide canoes

I also finished restoring an 18' 1968 Old Town OTCA. The canoe was bought new in the late 1960s at Fernald's Marine in Newbury, Massachusetts, and has remained in the same family ever since. The daughter of the original owner has fond memories of canoe trips in northern Maine with her family during the early 1970s. Maine was much more difficult to get around in during those days!



The owner's parents on Baker Lake in Maine in the Old Town OTCA during the early 1970s.

This canoe was a real challenge to restore. It had been recanvassed a few times and most recently had been stored on the ground. It required numerous new rib tops, half a dozen new ribs, decks, stem ends, mahogany outwales, keel and canvas. The canoe was originally bright white in color with distinctive red Old Town decals on the hull. The owner distinctly remembered the decals and wanted them reproduced. With the help of Benson Gray and his archives, I managed to get a local graphics shop to closely reproduce the originals which are otherwise unavailable.

The 1968 OTCA before restoration.

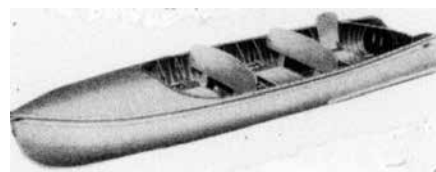


The 1968 OTCA after restoration.

Bill Clements Just Won't Quit!

Last year Bill announced his retirement and that he had no plans to ever do another canoe or boat restoration. Well, that didn't work. He has been found deep into the restoration of a 1948 Pen Yan Sea Goer. The Sea Goer is a 14' outboard boat, the beam is 5'. It has a 4' foredeck with a windshield. When it was built it was rated for 22hp, a big motor for the times. The front and center seats have padded backrests, the stern seat has a small backrest against the starboard rail to operate the motor.

Construction is standard canoe type, but, it has oak ribs. It is fabric covered. Bill bought this boat a long time ago, it has been in storage while he has been working on customers' canoes and boats. Everything has been removed from the interior, rub rails removed along with the outer stem. The keels, three of them, have not yet been taken off. Everything is on hold now until warmer weather when the interior can be stripped. As usual the biggest job is going to be the undoing of previous attempts at repair.



Penn Yan 1949 catalog page.

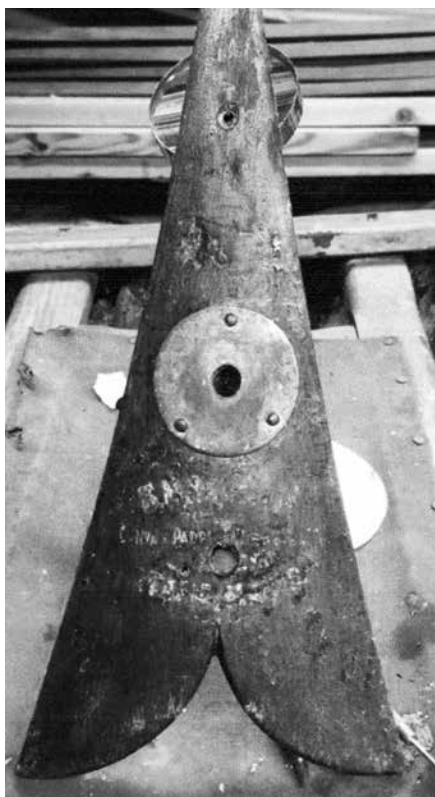
Greg O'Brien's Latest Morris Project

When one has a 16' Morris that is almost perfect what is the best thing to do? Greg O'Brien knows, he has started working on an 18' Morris to round out the fleet. Since 2015 will be the year of the Morris at Assembly this is a very good restoration project.

This 18 footer needs a fair amount of attention, one deck has been replaced (not well) and the inwales are broken in several places. Greg has no choice but to replace them. Other than that the hull appears to be solid, with the usual broken rib here and there and some planking to be replaced.

The Morris as it arrived at Greg's home. From a distance it looks pretty good, up close the years of use and abuse become obvious.





This is the damaged deck after several coats of yellow paint were removed. A flag pole socket had been attached right over the Morris decal. The round plate was used to attach a painter.



After stripping the interior, the hull is starting to look good. The shadow of the floor rack is visible, it is missing and a new one will have to be made. A Morris isn't a Morris without a floor rack. The broken inwales are obvious in this view, being a closed gunwale canoe with pocketed ribs the replacement will be a chore, fortunately this canoe has found the right home. There are keel screw holes on every rib, this is a Morris trait, almost all other builders attached the keels at every other rib; Morris felt that the keels should be more secure.

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In a past issue I wrote about this Beetle Cat and how I became the owner of it by way of “winning” an eBay auction. At first I thought, what a great find it was, only to learn it needed much more restoration than I originally expected. Then it turned out to be not as much of a problem project as I thought.

After getting it in the shop and removing the deck and sideboards, I found that most of the ribs and floors needed replacing. I had expected to replace some but not 80% of them. It was stated in the auction that the ribs and bottom were fiberglassed by a professional. I doubt if a professional (an ethical one) would glass in ribs and floors the way this was done. It only served to capture rot. It wicked up the ribs under the glass from the keel to the sheer plank. The wood crumbled in my hands in all of the floors and all the ribs from the forward end of the centerboard trunk to the transom. The bottom of the transom was also bad, glassed around the inside edge.

At first it seemed a very doable project before the aforementioned ribs. But then it began to look like a much larger project than I wanted to deal with, and the thought of using it as a lawn decoration filled with flowers soon came to mind. Then I suddenly heard my father’s voice in the back of my head saying, “there is always a way around any problem or obstacle, you just have to figure out what it is.”

So the main problem is the need for new floors and ribs, and I had to figure out a way to replace them at a practical cost in a reasonable amount of time. Cutting the floors was the easy part. The old ones served as patterns for tracing and cutting out the new ones. These were made of white oak. The ribs were a little different. They are about 1” square, and steam bent to the contour of the inside of the hull. Steam bending was the main obstacle. I did not want to spend a lot of time steam bending all those ribs and half ribs into place. There are a lot of them.

I had to figure out a way around this problem. I came up with a potential solution. I had read in the pages of this magazine (perhaps it was Dave Lucas and the Tiki Hut Happy Hour guys) of frames being laminated in place onto the hull. It seemed like something way too easy. Could that really work with this? Yes, it did work, worked very well, and quickly, too. Did I mention easy?

I already had some white oak left over from the making the floors, and I set up the table saw to rip the oak into strips. The stock

eBay Beetle Cat Restoration

By Greg Grundtisch

thickness was 1 1/4” thick, and I cut 1/8” strips out of it. Now I had 10’ long strips of oak that had enough flex in them to be bent into the shape of the hull.

I had previously removed all the ribs and floors and pulled the hull into the correct alignment. That was done with a rope and pulley from the aft corner to the forward opposite corner of the side deck framing. Then I began laminating the frames in place of the old ones. This was so quick and easy I became a little worried that I might be doing something wrong. I just laid down thickened epoxy along the hull where the strips were to go and screwed the strips down, following along the curve of the hull. The strips were glued and temporarily screwed from the top of the sheer plank over the keel to the top of the opposite sheer plank. Then they were cut off flush. Same with the half ribs from the keel next to the trunk on up the side. I then let the epoxy cure and removed the screws. The process was repeated a second time with another layer on top. I will add a third layer if it seems necessary.



The floors are next. They are being dry fitted to the exact shape of the hull. I plan to set the floors in 2” wide epoxy saturated glass matt, (not cloth, cloth bad) and temporarily screw into place until the epoxy cures. Then I’ll turn the hull over and use bronze ring nails on the outside countersunk (nail set) into the cedar planks of the hull to fasten the ribs and bronze screws through the hull into the floors. The original fasteners were iron tacks and screws, all rusted and turned to iron oxide powder in most places. This boat was likely built in the ‘40s, and iron fasteners were the common choice.

The next step will be preparing the outside of the hull for a layer of biaxial cloth set in epoxy. Then fairing and painting the hull. Then the hull will be turned back over and the internal parts and pieces will be installed and then the plywood deck pieces, covered in glass or canvas.

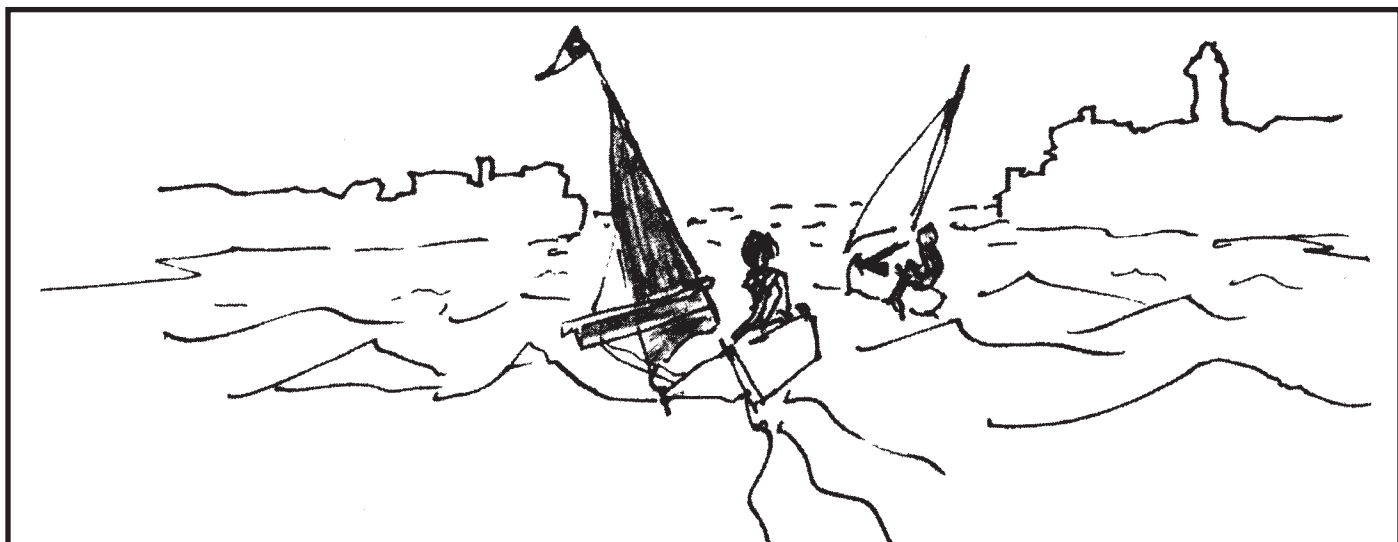
This system has worked out well so far and the only setback has been the extreme record breaking snow and sub zero weather up here in almostCanada (Buffalo). I was unable to accomplish much this winter until the temps warmed up into the 20s in March. At that temperature I could get the shop heated up enough with the wood stove to get the epoxy to cure. We had weeks of single digits and below zero and the stove couldn’t handle it. That global warming thing hasn’t materialized as I had hoped.

Then a few other details need attending to such as building the mast, gaff and boom, rudder and tiller, gaff jaws and gooseneck, to name just a few.

I am optimistic about getting this boat completed and in the water this season, at least for a trial sail. I also have a skipjack that needs to go back into the water this year. It has been under cover for several years, waiting (procrastinating) way too long for its glorious return to the Great Lake Erie. Then there is that Herreshoff Eagle I “won” on eBay to rig and bend on sails and check out to see what, if anything, is needed for its eventual return to water. I also need to be setting up regular meetings and workshops for the Buffalo Maritime Center TSCA.

This boating thing, especially wooden and traditional ones, can really become an obsession, addiction or likely an affliction. It’s hard to tell exactly what it is, but it does command and consume a lot of time. Of which I currently have little. Sooner or later it will all get done, but around here later is often the way it goes.

So many boats, so many projects.



Unlike Dan Quayle having to be told, “You’re no Jack Kennedy,” I already know that I’m no Nat Herreshoff. Just because I’ve built six boats in the last six years, that doesn’t mean I know what I’m doing. But I have learned a few things along the way. My first four boats were kits from Chesapeake Light Craft and, for one reason or another, they all ended up quite different from the pictures in the catalogue. The last two boats were my own designs.

I’ve heard it said that men don’t like to ask directions. Well, some of us don’t like to follow them either. And that’s just what I did, starting with the CLC kit rowboat, Chester Yawl, a 15’, plywood lapstrake Whitehall with wingglass transom and a tiny, 6” high removable seat. That little seat was for all those builders, like myself, who chose not to purchase the \$669 sliding seat. But that seat sucked. I wanted my boat to have a big, comfortable seat so I made one and glued it in.

Come launch day, with friends and family in attendance, I proudly positioned myself on my giant seat, put the oars in the oarlocks, and immediately discovered something fundamentally wrong. I couldn’t row the thing. The oar handles bumped along my thighs as the blades barely cleared the water on the return stroke. Either my thighs were too high or the gunwales were too low. There would be no lowering the seat. It was permanent. So I bolted 2”x6”s to the rails, pointing skyward, and the problem was fixed.

The boat now rowed fine and I’d take it out for hours and hours, in all conditions, until one day a brilliant idea came to me. Imagine this boat with a sail! Just think, I could shove off from the dock, row for miles into the wind and then when I’ve had enough, return home sailing with the wind. So I added a rudder, and my old windsurfing rig. She moved along quite fast, and then one day she suddenly flipped, throwing me overboard. I was lucky. Someone came to the rescue.

My second boat was going to address this rescue issue. It was still to be a rowboat, because I love to row, and it would also sail, because rowing gets old. This time I chose another CLC kit, Annapolis Wherry, a long and narrow (18’x38”), lapstrake speedster. To fix the rescue problem, I enclosed the whole thing in decking except for a small, watertight cockpit like on a Laser. Removable wings were added to function both as outriggers for rowing and hiking seats for sailing. I made a birdsmouth mast and the sail came off a Sunfish. The boat worked, sort of. It was self rescuing, but sailing into a strong breeze was a wet and wild ride, and because I had more than doubled its weight with tons of epoxy and way too thick decks, the bow sub-

Boat Building by Trial and Error

By Rich Buck



Paper Jet sailboat.

merged through oncoming whitecaps, filling the cockpit in no time.

For boat #3, I chose yet another CLC kit, the Passagemaker Dinghy, a stitch and glue, 11’7”x56” rowboat that can also be sailed. Finally, a boat designed to do both! But it had a square bow, which I didn’t particularly like, and a deep, wide open topside that would mean trouble when it tipped over. Not to worry, I could probably fix all of that. So the first thing I did was to not install the final lapstrake board, which lowered the freeboard about 4”. Then to deal with the square bow, I forced the two sides together to form a point. This changed the hull’s shape, curling the sides back in like on a Spanish galleon.

The directions were now useless and I was staring at lots of extra parts. So with irrational exuberance, I added decking all around, a one man cockpit and watertight compartments everywhere, plus a 70sf Bermuda rig off of craigslist. The boat sailed pretty well. It handled moderate winds, plowing right along due to its short length and generous rocker. And as for rowing, it wasn’t fast, but it could

spin in circles with ease. There was one problem, however, after a capsize it was impossible to climb into the cockpit from the water without it rolling over again, likely due to the Spanish galleon effect. A boarding ladder on the transom solved that.

Next I spotted a newcomer to the Chesapeake Light Craft line, Dudley Dix’s Paper Jet, a 13’5”, 100lb planing sailboat that made my heart race just looking at it. Shaped like an F16 and obviously self bailing, (water just flowed over the fuselage and out the back), it had Midlife Crisis written all over it, but I didn’t care. Of course, there’d be no rowing this. That would be ridiculous. One thing though, people who saw me building it asked, “where do you sit?” I thought it was a strange question. Well, turns out they were onto something. I’m not as fit as I used to be, and that became apparent when tacking and jibing in big winds. But for the thrill of flying on a beam reach at Mach 1, I could suffer a little. My next boat would require a seat of some kind though.

That boat would be my first 100% original design, an okoume plywood, 16’x3’ flat bottom canoe that could be rowed, sailed, self rescued, car topped and also be comfortable. No measured drawing here. I’d design it as I went along. During the construction the car top idea began to fade as it got heavier and heavier with each new part. Not a problem, I cut the boat in half with a hand saw, then added bulkheads, which bolted together. I also built some removable wings with raised oarlocks. By now, with four years of boat building under my belt, I sensed that all those watertight compartments that I’d been installing in my boats weren’t necessary. All I needed was a deck that kept the water out when the boat capsized, plus a mast that floated. The original balanced lug sail proved too top heavy to right, so I switched to a Bermuda rig of about 70sf. The boat sailed dry and manageable in 20 knot winds, was comfortable and rowed well. The hull weighed about 100 lbs.

And now I come to last year’s build, a 16’x5’, 90lb, 120sf sail (main and jib), skin on frame, planing sailboat. Speed, comfort and weight were the criteria when I started to design this. I liked the looks of the Volvo Ocean Race boats and tried to copy their hull shape, a hard chine, V bottom that goes from vertical at the bow to near horizontal at an extra wide transom. With a magic marker, I drew a full scale plan view of its starboard half on my shop floor.

Somehow that worked as my only drawing. Starting with cardboard patterns that were transferred to 5/32” plywood, I glued eight bulkheads (one every 2’) perpendic-

Row/sail canoe and Chester Yawl (background).



Annapolis Wherry.





Passagemaker row/sailboat



Skin-on-frame sailboat.

ular to the 16' long x 16" tapering to 11" high plywood backbone and then connected everything with 12 evenly spaced 1"x1"x16' stringers, notched and glued into the edge of the bulkheads. Wrapping it in polyester cloth (gdysen@gmail.com) required two people, one pulling while the other stapled. I ironed it (no starch) to shrink the cloth and then sealed it with a two part urethane (skinboats.org).

Launch day conditions were a little windy for a shakedown cruise, about 20 knots, so I went out with just the mainsail (80sf). As the boat first began to heel, I got out on the rail, pulled in the sheet and then heard all these cracking sounds. I thought the mast was going over. Turns out, the stringers were just adjusting themselves as the whole boat was twisting. The noise stopped after a minute, when enough glue joints had popped. Not to worry, the cloth held everything together.

And for my next act...



Rag Time transom

Row/sail canoe.



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My kids enjoyed a little story when they were tots. The main character was named Hildegard Reinheffer. She was a very nice hippopotamus who wanted to be an opera singer. I don't know why, but if I have a few cocktails and look at the hull shape of my latest boat in the right light, it reminds me of Hildegard. That is a nice way to say she has the hull shape of a hippopotamus's bottom. The boat is actually a very dignified mid '70s vintage outboard model 19' aluminum Starcraft Chieftain cuddy cabin cruiser, but the name came to me and I think it fits.



Hildegard's first day lookover.

So what exactly am I going to do to *Hildegard* you ask? To begin with, maybe you are familiar with the Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II, better known as the Warthog. Warthogs are one of the most ferocious aircraft America's fighting men and women will ever have on their side. They are elegantly designed beasts, don't cost a lot of money for their ilk and can't be broken with a hammer. Our ground troops have never had a better friend. Unlike any proposed replacement, the A-10 can linger around a trouble spot and fly slow and low enough for a pilot to tell friend from foe. Unfortunately the Air Force wants to mothball the fleet. What a crock!

But this is not about my disappointment with terrible judgment of the Air Force brass. It's that I hold great respect for the Fairchild Republic engineers and craftsman who made those beasts. In fact, they actually inspired me for this boat. As Fairchild built Warthogs around GE Gatling Guns, my plan is to build the *Hildegard Reinheffer* around a powered refrigerator. No more coolers, melting ice and slimy provisions for me. Instead of a nasty Warthog pumping out a most certain and ugly death to our foes, my lighthearted *Hildegard* will ever so nicely dispense properly chilled appetizers and adult beverages to myself, her rabble crew and guests.

Anyone not into boating might think it is a lot of work and trouble to go through just to keep a couple of grinders and a rack of beverages properly chilled. But maybe some of my fellow *MAIB* readers understand that for a cruise of a week or two's duration it is effort and money well spent? Time has come to solve the most important issue mod-

The Hildegard Reinheffer

By Johnny Mack

ern boaters face, keeping provisions properly and economically chilled on cruisers.

I set my budget at \$2K for this project. That includes boat, trailer, materials, tax, registration and the refrigeration system, soup to nuts. I figure over a five year period of my anticipated cruising habits I'll spend over \$200 on ice. I hope that will be the cap for the refrigeration aspect of my plan.

Of course I found her on craigslist. And you must have anticipated by now that my friend Bill Moulton, of Bill's Boat Yard in Plainfield, Vermont, graciously let me use his shop to get this project off to a good start.

I always wanted an old aluminum cuddy cabin and *Hildegard* was love at first sight and a good excuse for this project. Although I looked at her through rose colored glasses, when it was time to open up the kimono I wasn't too shocked to see she was far from perfect. The reality was she needs just the slightest bit of attention before I can even think of refrigeration. The ham and egg work includes the typical replacement of the deck, transom and anything else made of wood. It's then on to the fleur de lis, which in my case means to hook her up her up with every accessory known to man that has been scrounged or reused in at least two other boats. Why I am like this I don't know. Portable D-cell operated LED navigation lights are far cheaper, easier and more reliable than wire runs, fuses and switches. Oops, I almost forgot the dual flag pole holders and water cannon. I want to outgrow this stage of my life but it is not going to happen on *Hildegard*.

I will cream out the main cabin by building plywood benches down each side. They will be convenient places to stow all kinds of gear and will be even be good for sitting on. I did that on my first cruiser project, the *Phoenix*, and was very satisfied with their functionality per dollar spent.



Beginnings of a bench.

A proper paint job is sorely needed. Her existing paint is uninspiring but is well adhered to the boat, so I will resist the urge to knock it down to bare aluminum. Instead, I will ever so gently scuff it up with #80 grit on a random orbital sander and roll on two coats of Glidden Polyurethane Oil Gloss Porch and Deck Enamel. I have settled on gray as it will compliment her hippopotamus bottom profile. I actually prefer a happier color but I have a gallon on hand and I won't be able to live with myself if I let \$27 go to waste. At

least it will be a righteous background for a gnarly set of shark's teeth, or maybe even a snappy World War II razzle dazzle camo job.

As for propulsion, I'm hanging a 1980s 10hp four stroke Yamaha high thrust motor on her. I like to think I got it for free after some horse trading. Or was it that it ended up costing me several times what a brand new unit in the box with a full warranty would cost? I've done the numbers over and over and it depends on how one looks at it. Ugh. The throttle and gear selection controls work fine but it has an odd setup as it is missing the wiring for remote start and kill buttons. I'm thinking I can mess about with that and extend the connections to the helm for full remote operation. That 10 won't break any speed records but it's a solid, well built unit and shouldn't give me a lick of trouble. I'm hoping it'll have the back to push *Hildegard* at 9mph and go forever on a gallon of juice.

So that nobody thinks I am mainstream, Rube Goldberg's designs still haunt me from my youth. I am thinking of incorporating some of them into *Hildegard*. To begin with, I have found the loping around I do with a small engine doesn't put enough water pressure on the strakes on the bottom of an aluminum boat to force them to do their job. That causes course wandering which means a lot of steering corrections to keep on track. Maybe three times an hour I expect I will have to put down my coffee and reach up to the helm and crank the wheel 6" one way or the other! I'm thinking a way to take some of the rigor out of the process is to run with Dave Lucas' motor in the rudder assembly he wrote about in February 2015. A human being only has so many elbow bends in a lifetime and with a powered refrigerator I plan on saving mine for better use.

Moving on, I want to build a platform over the transom splash well. This will serve as a safe step into a swaying boat from a bouncing floating dock. It will also be a good place for a bike rack, a foothold for cannon balling over the side and as a base for a sound deadening box over the motor. Small motors operating at top rpm while cruising at a slow speed have a sound quality all their own. That noise is always there and can grind one down to a nub by the end of the day. Powerboats can't be too quiet for me, so enters the cone of silence, a device that I am plagiarizing from a fellow not normally known for his genius with equipment, Maxwell Smart.

The cone will just be a plywood box that will wall off the business end of the unit. I will attach it with a hinge to the splash well platform so it can be tilted out of the way to check motor functions. I have no illusions it will eliminate all motor noise but if it deflects the edge off the droning and the exhaust I will consider it a total success.

Cone of silence in process.



I would then like to raise the cuddy cabin about 6". The extra headroom would turn a so so cabin into a great one. If it is attached to the boat like I think it is, it will be a piece of cake to drill out a few rivets, hoist up the entire cabin and attach strips of heavy duty diamond plate aluminum down the sides to give it added height. If, for reasons I am unaware of, formally trained marine engineers and skilled master craftsmen with years of design and production experience defied logic and attached the cabin to the boat in a way I am not thinking of, it will complicate my plans and delay this portion of the refit. We will soon see who knows more about this!

Finally, I really liked the hardtop on the *Phoenix*, so I will add one to *Hildegard*. It made for some comfortable cruising as it kept the sun at bay on hot days and kept me dry during the little bit of rain I encountered.

A hard top is more work than a bimini top but it gives an excellent structure on which to hang a makeshift tent or bug net for overnight mooring. A good hard top is also worth its weight in gold when it's time to button everything up for winter. I don't have the luxury of storing my boats inside during our winters so a nice sturdy hard top makes for an easy way to protect a boat from snow. *Hildegard* will be one of the few boats out there with a top designed to support a snow load as winterizing is the only boat related chore I hate. I will never have to construct frames and snow tents again. I only have to hang tarps to hooks under the eaves and weight the bottoms down with dead windshield washer jugs filled with water to keep them taught.



Hard top frame goes up.



The almost finished hard top.

Now for the mission related essentials, the powered refrigerator. The first problem is where to put it. Although it would be out of the elements and fit nicely, I didn't want it in the cuddy. I feared that on a hot day the exhaust heat from the back end of the refrigeration process would slowly cook me in the cabin like I was a pot roast in a crock pot. I surmised the best spot for the fridge would be to wedge it in the plywood bench assembly on the port side between the first mate station and the transom, which pretty much tagged that area as the galley.

Aware of my budget, Bill graciously gave me a used RV camper condensing type refrigerator he salvaged from a class A camper

he restored. That baby looked ideal as it was free and could be powered three ways, DC, AC and propane. The propane was my first choice but that thought only lasted two seconds. I could get prodigious amounts of cold beverages out of a 20lb tank of propane and it would have cost me next to nothing to get it going as I had a tank and hose on hand but I wimped out. I just have a hard time purposely operating a continuous flame 6' from the fuel tanks. Maybe I am being overcautious but I don't mess around with gas in a boat. I fuel all my boats through crisply maintained jugs and lines but I don't trust them for a minute not to leak or vent fuel vapors.

I moved on to electric operation as I had a couple of extra marine batteries underfoot looking for a job. I surmised I could put them right to work on this. If I was disciplined on their use, I estimated they could supply a full day of power before needing a recharge, which seemed to be adequate. With the right circuitry, I could isolate the starting battery from the accessory bank. I could then simultaneously bring everything up to full charge by running the motor during my typical cruising jaunts of six hours a day.

DC was the logical next choice because of the easy installation. Alas, I tested the refrigerator in my garage only to find the DC did not work. I thought about replacing the heater element but was concerned with frilly fibrous insulation poking out around it as it is an older unit. It is or it isn't, I don't know and I don't want to find out. So I thought it best just to leave it alone. Not giving up on DC yet, I heard good things about the efficiency of modern DC compressor units and considered selling out my Scottish roots and purchasing a new one. I looked up some prices on the net and killed that idea on the spot.

It was looking like Mr Westinghouse trumped Mr Edison again and AC would win the war. The AC on my castoff fridge worked fine and the price was right but I would need an inverter to operate it off batteries. I heard the modern inverters sizzled but there would still be a power loss from the DC/AC conversion process. I thought if I was going to blow the dust off my wallet for an inverter I might as well go all the way and buy a more efficient refrigerator, maybe even an Energy Star unit! After all this combination was still cheaper than a new DC unit.

From what I could tell, the compressor-based systems such as used by the small dorm type units are not only more efficient than the condenser unit I was trying to salvage, but they cool faster, too. Put a suitcase of beverages in a condenser unit and the chilling is so slow you would no longer see the hype about the mountains turning blue as a marketer's gimmick, but a pretty darned good idea.

So, for an envy inspiring unit, I would now have to buy an inverter and a new refrigerator. That might be worth it though. With an AC system I could leverage my work for another cruising accessory I covet, a 1200 watt microwave. Besides, I could save my batteries at night and sneak a power cord to the shore at a marina. I could run the oven and charge the fridge, at the same time, on their juice! Ah, er, did anyone but me get nervous when I said I would be running full city power through water, to an aluminum boat, through the many times recycled electrical components that I would use to wire a flashlight bulb reading lamp to cheaply made indoor only rated appliances made in China? What could possible go wrong there?

Things were starting to get out of hand but there was still another budget option. The new 12v thermocouple units caught my attention. They have no fluids to evaporate or mechanically compress. The problem with these is they are labeled by their manufacturers as coolers and not refrigerators. Most have technical mumbo jumbo that states they only cool to 30° below the ambient temperature. Daytime would be sad as when I need it most, for example on a day that is 85°, I would at best only get a chill to 55°. Maybe I could charge it up at night when it cools down to say 65°. That would give me acceptably chilled provisions to a crisp 35°. Is the insulation good enough too keep things under control during the day? That sounds promising but do they or do they not work? Pretty risky for a Scotsman to spend a hundred plus on something that might not do the job.

Stretching things way out I gave a fleeting thought to building a water cooled jacket around the thermocouple circuit board. I was thinking of a 12v aquarium pump on a timer, cycling cold lake water through a nice deep input hose to a bladder packed around the thermocouple and back out to the drink. It would be kind to the batteries and as the lake water would be much colder than the air it would give the thermocouple a lower starting point for the 30° cooling drop. There is still a problem because as a slow condenser fridge needs blue mountains to show us when a load is chilled, a recreational model thermocouple unit would need a calendar. I finally came to and forced Rube Goldberg out of my brain.

Well listen to me! As you can see refrigeration, which was a major reason I bought *Hildegard*, has developed a life of its own. I have only come up with reasons not to proceed and it has become clear to me that more research is needed to nail down a system that is cheap, safe, easy, fast, reliable, efficient and cold. I am at loggerheads over this and its time to do what I should have done all along, switch her over to the emergency channel and send a *MAIB* distress call, "Break break, this is Johnny Mack on the *Hildegard Reinheffer* calling all contributors, the mountains are white, I repeat the mountains are white and there is melt water grinder slime on the cans! Request assistance, over!"

I'd love to read about your ideas on refrigeration. I should probably clarify that all the components will be somewhat protected from the elements but it would be a good thing if everything was outdoor rated, if there is such a thing. In the meantime, finished or not, I plan to run the heck out of *Hildegard* this summer and hope to cruise portions of Lake Champlain, the Oswego Canal and the Hudson River.

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This will be the last mention of the horrible winter blizzards of 2015 and what a bunch of dumb asses you guys are who live anywhere above the Florida state line. I sure hope it is anyway. How much more of this crap can you stand?



Here's Steve and me weathering the coldest day of the winter (it did get down to 32° last night but it's going up to 80° tomorrow, what the hell?) out in the Tiki hut with a blazing fire in the stove, taking it easy and contemplating going for a midnight boat ride (which we did).



And then here's Richard Honan up in Boston playing in the snow yet again, worrying about the snow load caving in his roof. Those guys even postponed the annual Snow Row in the ice race till spring because of all this. I really should stop showing you these pictures, we have enough transplants as it is.



This is Helen and some of her quilting girls tonight. I made them a huge room to do all of their creative work in, it's 12' by 40' with a view of the river. When I get too old to make boats I guess I can take up sewing and spend my days indoors.



Our friend Scotty is putting a new motor on this 35 year old wooden boat. It was built by George Lozier of Sarasota and still looks perfect. George is one of the last of the great old time wood builders whose boats all look like this, you should see some of his carvel planked sailboats, they look like glass boats.

From the Tiki Hut

By Dave Lucas



Whoever owned this one didn't let water stand in the bottom. The wooden boats we build usually get glassed to hope they look like this for a while.



The Texas 200 attracts many strange boats, here's one, Gene Berry or someone who knows him, has a sense of humor or maybe just wants to make a point, make the damn boat strong and keep this sign under the water. This race is run in very shallow water, is hot as hell and has strong winds. I have put the main instigators on notice that I'll give them hell if their boats break any rudders or centerboards. You know it's going to happen so do something about it dumb ass. Last year a dozen or so boats had rudder failures.



You know a perfect boat when you see one. This is a perfect boat for its intended use, fast, shallow water running with a touch of comfort. All boats in Florida should have a top. There's never a time when should be out in the open so why not make a permanent one that looks good and is useable. This one is perfect.



Pat Johnson of Pensacola is just finishing up this one. He's tired of going slow so he's putting a 70hp on this classic looking boat. Someone gave him an old mahogany Chris Craft hull that was totally gone except for the bottom. He used that as the starting point for this nice little cruiser. I really like the concept of this boat, cool looking but still goes like crazy. They also have a coastal race here in Florida in the summer, the FL120. This one is a lot more user friendly and power boats are welcome to come out and play with the sailboats, why not, it's a good excuse to be on the water and not everyone wants to sail or camp in a tiny boat. This "race" is up in the Panhandle, we need one in the summer farther down south.





His boat gave me the push I needed to start one of my own. I love *Helen Marie* but sometime I want to get somewhere fast. It's going to be a traditional looking, high speed, all weather commuter boat. It will have the look of a lobster boat with a fixed hard top like the "Mega Yacht." It'll be 18' long with a 40hp or 50hp motor so I can get up to 30mph or so and still run in shallow water. These pictures are on the second day of the build. I found the old strong back I used for *Helen Marie* out in the woods, bought some of this OSB from Lowe's for \$8 a sheet and laid out the molds from some plans we had around here. All I need is a table of offsets to get the basic hull and I'll make up the rest as I go along. None of this wood will stay in the boat, the hull will be a plywood and glass build with nothing that will rot exposed. I had forgotten how much fun it is to begin a new project with nothing but a vague idea of what it'll look like.



One of you (Scotty I think) sent this. It's actually a good idea, will keep me focused on the important things in life when I'm too old to do the real thing.

I'm building my new boat because of Pat Johnson, it's all his fault. When I saw Pat's boat I just had to have one also and then he sent this video of his going warp speed: <https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=907320649310694>

Of course, my boat is going to be way better than his. They're both the same size, 18'x6' with custom cabins, and since we both build the same way (make it up as we go along) there's no telling what comes out. Washington Dan also builds this way but we do know what his will look like. It doesn't matter the size, they all look the same.



You saw the start of my boat last time, here's how far I am mid March. The plywood turned out to be pretty easy to bend into the shape I wanted, I pulled the front part with the most bend in about halfway and let it sit overnight and the next day finished the rest of the bend easily.



I used a couple layers of this really heavy ass cloth to get started. Phil gave us a big roll of this stuff so why not. We also have a bunch of rolls of the same weight cloth in these 6" tape rolls. I put one layer of this down the middle and then lots more of the 4' wide on the rest of the hull. I think the bow has six layers of this heavy stuff. The whole thing will get one more layer of heavy triaxial cloth to make a strong smooth cover. Once that's done I'll turn the hull over. What I'm after is a lobster boat look with a permanent hard top like a picnic boat that rides smoothly in a light chop at about 30mph.



I can't hold an epoxy spreader anymore with my arthritic hands so I got some cheap squeegees from Lowe's and slipped the spreader in where the rubber goes, works great. Why didn't you guys think of this, it makes glassing so much easier.



Here's how we got the "Mega Yacht" out of the shop. It was always a mystery to visitors (and us, also) how we were going to get the big thing out with only 3" of clearance at the top. I'd say that we'd just hook it up to the truck and pull it out, no problem. At least I hoped it would be no problem, you can see how close it is.

And once it's out, how do you get it on its trailer? I think it even surprised the guys here when I told them that we'd just take the wheels off the trailer, put the tongue against a tree and slide it on. It couldn't be raised up any because of the roof. We double blocked the boat with cables and chains around a tree out front, ran the end out to a truck and pulled it right out. Damn if it didn't actually work. We couldn't put anything under the hull to help it slide because of the clearance so it just drug across the dirt floor. Good thing because the outdrive wouldn't go up high enough to clear the floor so it just dug a nice little ditch about 3" deep in the dirt.

Messing About in Boats, April 2015 – 39



Red showed up about this time, took one look and said, “what the hell are you guys up to now and what happened to the wheels?” Howard jacked it up, put the wheels back on and that’s it. He still has more work to do and then we’ll have to figure what we’re going to do with it.



I’ll never understand horsepower. Steve has been using this 14’ skiff to come to “work” while he’s redoing *Chelsea*. It has a 2hp Honda outboard and it’ll plane with just him on board, he can outrun me in *Helen Marie*. Makes you wonder why the 16’ bass boats need 300hp.



Lance and Kayak Kathy took one of my foam 14 footers out and immediately started building some for themselves. The things are amazing, they really perform and they can easily throw them up on their cartop. He’s adding a little red tint to the epoxy to get a color all the way through. They really do need two layers of cloth for strength and puncture protection. The big guy in one of my boats is Steve Hill, a kayak buddy of Crazy Steve. He went out a skeptic and came back a convert.

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Another “why didn’t I think of this” idea. Kevin Lott is on the final leg of his Melon-seed build and look what he did for the forward hatch cover. It’s just a standard 8” plastic screw in hatch that he did this to, brilliant.



This shot of the inside shows that he was planing something. He’s hoping to bring the boat to Cedar Key this year, it’s the first full weekend in May, be there.~

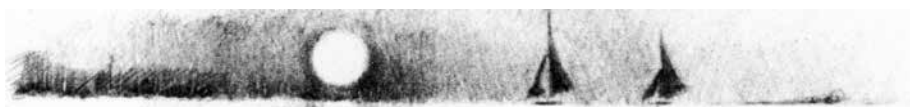


Here’s a picture Frank Smoot took of the beach lineup for this years Everglades Challenge. There was a record number of boats, again. And here are a couple videos of this years Everglades Challenge with boats on the beach: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0eeo40ZqxM&feature=youtu.be> start <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uruh29wPFPM> ec beach

The Coast Guard made them cancel the official race shortly after the start because they were getting too many calls for assistance (14 right in Tampa Bay at start!). This is supposed to be an expedition style race where participants don’t get, and shouldn’t need, any help but they had a lot of new people who may not have gotten the word. No one made them go out if it was too rough, That’s the problem when things get too big.



Be warned that if you’re out in a boat and come anywhere near our dock you’ll get sucked in, sometime even made to consume too much beer or whatever is available at the time. Bill and Barb and friend made that mistake and are now what we call “friends of the Tiki Hut,” meaning that they’re always welcome. We really hit it off, in 1969 Helen was an Army nurse in Viet Nam and Bill was an Army ground pounder who got shot in Viet Nam, but even better, they make wine and I drink wine, they own a vineyard in southern Illinois. I don’t know if I’ve ever had any Illinois wine. They aren’t pulling my leg are they?



Traditional Boat of the Month
Melonseed
 By Mr Cleat



Roger Crawford's Melonseed from his advertisement in *Small Craft Advisor*.

Designed as a step up from a Sneakbox, the low riding Melonseed has a buoyant bow that will not scoop up waves when it gets a bit rough and is designed to sail the open bays rather than row. Sure, a 'seed can be rowed but she will sail in a zephyr of a breeze. It is long for its width so looks elegant with its lapstrake hull and wineglass transom. Rather than other common 19th century duck hunting boats like Sneakboxes or Seaford skiffs, it is the Melonseed that is still commercially built. And beautiful wooden replicas are showing up at meets as well.

It is fun to sail and has a dedicated following who show up at a moment's notice to race and party. They regularly participate in the annual Delaware River TSCA Meet at Union Lake in southern Jersey and have a great time competing for their own prizes and bragging rights but also participating in our traditional small craft activities. Their builder, Roger Crawford, is famous for saying, "Growing old is mandatory, but growing up is optional."

Roger's fiberglass version sails a double sprit rig, a sprit for the peak and one for a boom, the sprit boom acts as a vang while riding a bit higher overhead. A big advantage is loading up for home, all the spars fit inside the boat, making a nice neat trailer package under a hull cover speeding down the road.

Other rigs on the homemade versions may have laced on booms but usually they retain the peak sprits. They rarely sail loose footed since the clew of the sail extends pretty far aft. Regardless, they are fun to sail in high winds as well as low.

Most replicas, as well as Roger Crawford's boats, are built to Chapelle's "Melonseed of 1888" plans that he reportedly found unpublished in *Forest & Stream's* old files. Large scale drawings for this 13'7" version are available from the Smithsonian. Maryland's Marc Barto drew two beautiful versions, one at 13'6" and one at 16'0", both available from *WoodenBoat*. The 16' version is quite fast, a competition has developed between a few from New Jersey and Dave Lucas' shade tree builders in Tampa, Florida.

Locally, Seaport boat builder Barry Thomas built one to Chapelle's lines in the '70s and describes sailing her in the 1974 Log of Mystic Seaport as "Strap her down and she just tears along." In 1974 Barry and New Jersey boat historian Wayne Yarnell measured a Melonseed in Northfield, New Jersey. At 13'10" she was a shade longer than Chapelle's with a bit more deadrise and a straighter keel. Her plans are available from the Seaport, ask

JGTSCA
John Gardner Chapter
of
Traditional Small Craft
Association

for catalog number "Misc. 5". She has two sail plans, both leg 'o mutton without sprits and one with a club at the end of the boom. Sounds like a head-knocker to me.

The Melonseed's wide plank keel will land her upright when the tide goes out, making her easy to beach or keep on an shallow outhaul. Her curved scimitar shaped daggerboard keeps the cockpit free. A wide foredeck keeps out the water and provides a place to stow decoys or picnic basket, as the case may be. A fun boat for a solo sail, easy to trailer launch and retrieve or a quiet boat for an evening sunset sail with a significant other. Think about planting some 'seeds.

In Our Shop

At Avery Point Community Boathouse, Nina, John Atkin's 11'4" cat rigged flat bottom skiff is progressing nicely. In the photo Rob Pittaway is rounding off the transom with drawknife and wooden block plane, all very traditional. Builder/leader George Spragg and Andy Strode fit the mast thwart, seat thwarts and mast step, all to be finished bright mahogany. Should look nice. Meanwhile, the interior looks like a porcupine with copper nails poking through the plank laps awaiting the Friday night crew to trim them and peen the nail ends over washers.



In Member Shops

Peter Vermilya has cut out the molds and keel for his Delaware Ducker to match the stems. He is strongly contemplating covering his lofting with a boat building. Either that or adding a floor to his shop for lofting. Too much snow for that.

At the Seaport Boat Shops

Jim McGuire and his team of volunteers are repaying the seams on *Mary*, a flat bottomed skiff, getting ready to paint for the coming season. Also in the Boathouse Shop is the Seaford skiff, *Helen Packer* (see photo), a second cousin to our featured Melonseed. Note the long, straight plank keel, Melonseeds usually

had theirs tucked up with a skeg aft. Instead, this Seaford skiff from Amityville on Long Island's Great South Bay has her garboards bent down to form a box keel similar to a Sea Bright Skiff. *Helen* was built for the Livery at Mystic in 1996 to replace a Ketchum skiff being acquisitioned. She was named for Helen Packer, long time secretary who helped the Boatshop and handled the sale of boat plans.



Meanwhile, in the John Gardner Boatshop across the way Jim has the team of Ed Rothman (see photo) and Ted Stanton re fastening the bottom of Beetle Cat *Lisa*. They are painstakingly removing old fastenings and replacing with silicon bronze, including interior butt blocks. Must be ready for the Tuesday night races come spring.



View from the Side Deck

Standing on the Deck in early March, looking out towards the mighty Thames, I can barely see the water for the piles of snow. Not the 99" Boston has received, but plenty for Connecticut. The University loaders have been busy piling it higher and deeper. I offered to help Rob across the slippery spots from the Boathouse and we both fell laughing into a snow bank. Spring cannot come soon enough.

I attended the Mystic Small Ships Modelers meeting on Saturday. What a great group! Eclectic. Radio Control (R/C) racers, historical static ships and operating models. The club project is underway: a working R/C 45" model of the tug *Kingston*, yes, the big red one guarding the entrance to the Seaport's South Gate. This active group usually meets the third Saturday of the month in the Campbell classroom in the basement of the Planetarium. Upcoming activities include a R/C Demo the weekend before the Wooden-Boat Show, June 20, a July Model Making Demo, a booth at the Engine Show in August as well as a barbecue in September.

The goal of the group is to promote modeling at the Seaport. There are over 2,000 models in the Seaport collection! Remember when the third floor of Stillman was all models? Perhaps a few could be brought out to the second floor now alongside the relocated Packard Deckhouse exhibit? To join this group, contact Bob Andrie at smallyacht sailor@gmail.com and come join the fun.

It's now been four months since I began construction of my 16' Adirondack Guide Boat. The snow storms in February slowed down the building process. The hull had been glassed and epoxied. In early March I gave the hull its final sanding before giving it a final sealer coat of RAKA Epoxy.



I weighed the hull this week, epoxied and glassed, inside and out (without inwales and outwales), 45lbs. The cherry wood inwales and outwales have been fabricated and shaped. There is quite a bit of tapering of the thickness and the height of these. After dry fitting them I hope to epoxy and screw them on permanently.

On February 19 brother Steve and my friend Art MacDonald accompanied me up to Gloucester to the Traditional Small Craft Association meeting. Henry Szostek discussed the history of the Blackburn Challenge, the 20 mile open water rowing race that circumnavigates Cape Ann each year. He is the only person who has successfully completed every Blackburn Challenge since the race's inception in 1987.

Following Henry's talk, I was invited to speak and give a building update on my Adirondack Guide Boat that I am building to row in next July's Blackburn Challenge. (OK, truth be told, I wasn't invited to speak, but that didn't stop me.)



The February 19 meeting of the TSCA in Gloucester.

Applying the final coat of RAKA epoxy to the hull.



20 Mile Build

By Richard Honan



Is that a hair in the wet epoxy?



Using a heat gun to help pop the small bubbles in the wet epoxy.



Weighing the hull, using a bathroom scale, 45 pounds.

Tapering and shaping the inwales and outwales



Detail of rub rail tapering.



Dry fitting the outwales.

Detail of the outwale meeting the bow stem.





Sighting the outwale for a fair 'sweet' curve.



Applying a coat of epoxy in preparation for installing the port outwale.



Applying thickened epoxy.



Clamping on the port outwale.

Anna and Emily excited to find the boat will be named for them.



Sanding the interior.



Routing the scuppers or drain holes into the inwales.



Easing the edges of the scuppers.

Easing the edges of the scuppers.



Now that the inwales and rub rails have been installed I've been installing the framing for the small bow and stern decks. Lots of measuring and double checking. The decks come back a total of 24" from the bow and stern. They are more of a structural element than a place of shelter.



Checking for fairness of the deck framing.



Test fitting 1/8" thick masonite templates or mock-ups of the carlins. Carlins are not to be confused with George Carlin, they are pieces that run fore and aft on the boat, they support the side decks and, along with the deck frames, define the cockpit. They are curved to somewhat follow the sheer clamp, but they do have their own curve.



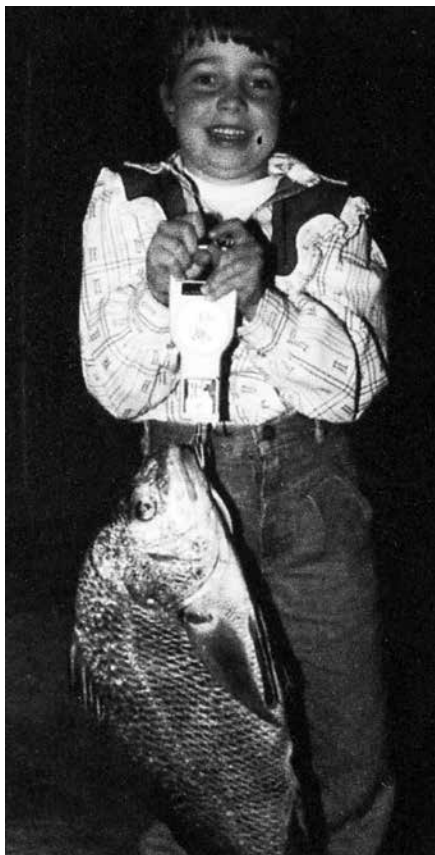
After the carlins are cut on the band saw, they need to be finished sanded or trued up on the disc sander or drum sander.

Test fitting the completed carlins and checking for fairness of deck frames and carlins.





This is the Phil Bolger designed Diablo I built in 1990 when we lived in Texas. It was built from plans with some modifications.



The Black Drum was caught by a friend's daughter, it was the biggest fish of the day.

Some Boats I Have Built

By Steve Trudell

I have been subscribing to *Messing About in Boats* for many years. I always look forward to each month's new content. The variety of the contributions each month is impressive. I feel connected to many of the authors' projects as I pursue my own. My many thanks to you and the contributors for years of enjoyment. I do miss Rob White's articles and from time to time I go back and read some. He was truly a special person and great story teller.

I would like to share some of my boats I have built either from scratch or kits over time with your readers.

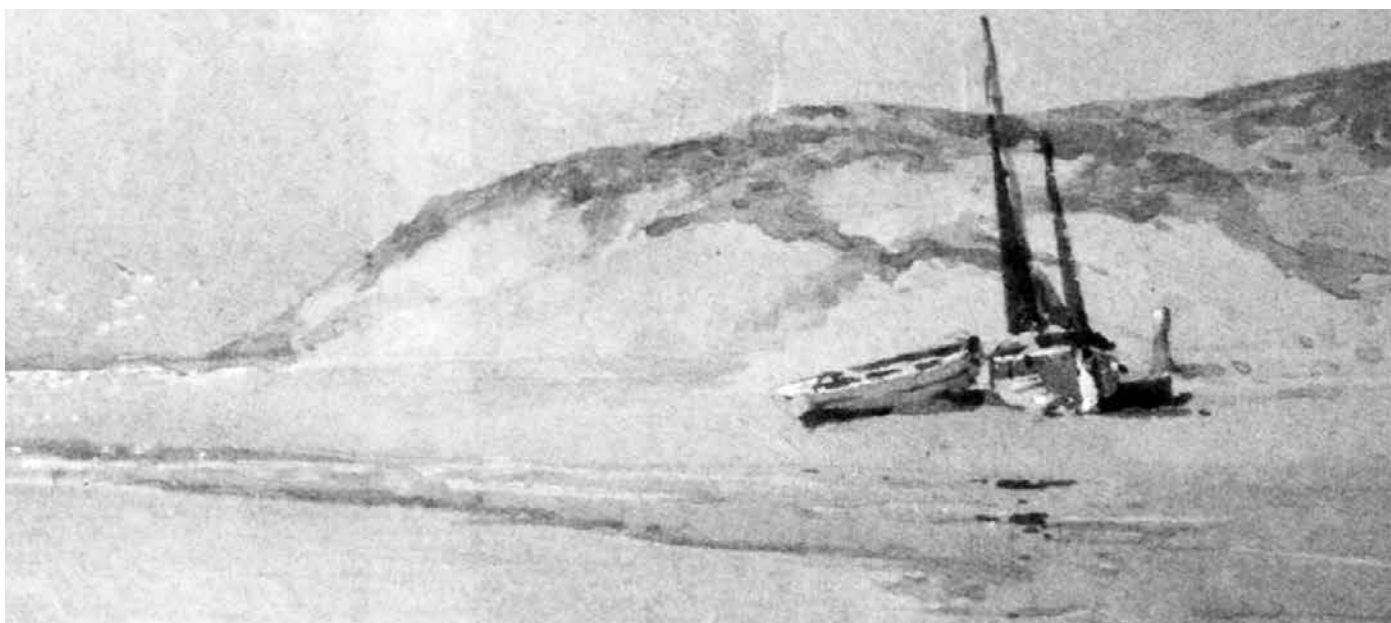


I built this CLC Passagemaker in 2009 here in Cody, Wyoming, from a kit. Good lumber is prohibitively expensive so a kit is the best option and quicker to build. It rows and sails well.



This is a Lutra Laker, designed by David Nichols from Austin, Texas. He cut a kit for me in 2010. It took me two years to complete due to other commitments. The mahogany was found in Salt Lake City, of all places. The boat has watertight compartments from stem to stern. It is a great fishing platform and goes well with a 9.8hp Nissan.

One of my fishing buddies enjoying the Laker.



In a past article I wrote about being careful what you wish for. I mentioned that I wished for a larger catboat. Larger than the 12' Beetle Cat I am currently working on. I also wished for a larger bank account. So far neither one has transpired but I did end up with a larger boat, a catboat of sorts.

In these past winter months I was somewhat obsessed with looking through the craigslist posts and eBay auctions. I was looking at what the current market rate for catboats in the 16' length was. I was not looking to buy, just getting an idea of what I couldn't afford, or even use at the present time. I was looking at catboats large enough to comfortably hold four adults and maybe a few kids in the cockpit for a day sail.

I wasn't looking for project boats, I have enough of those now. I was wishing for a water ready catboat on a roadworthy trailer in a location that was reasonably accessible from my current locale. I found plenty of options and learned that I was correct in not being able to afford the ones that would fit my wishes. Then it magically appeared, I found something special. A great deal!

I found a Herreshoff Eagle on a heavy duty trailer, all in very good, water and roadworthy condition with many extras and new sails and a tabernacle mast, an outboard in a well and an air conditioner, of all things! The eBay auction was at a price I thought too good to be true. Upon further review, it turned out to be true and a really great deal. I bid on the Eagle with five days left on the auction.

A Herreshoff Eagle is a sloop rigged catboat, or so it is claimed by some. It is not to be confused with a Herreshoff America, a catboat with traditional cat rig. It is said that an Eagle is the same as an America with a clipper bow and bowsprit added. Somewhat true. The Eagle is slightly wider and slightly longer. The cabins and cockpits are basically the same. The Eagle has a wheel whereas the America has a tiller and the cabin windows are oval on the cat and rectangular on the Eagle. There are other minor differences as well. The basic hull is very close to identical. The Eagle has a more salty, Down East look and is often described as a catboat sired by a Friendship sloop. This is said due to the clipper bow and profile of the boat. Both boats have flat, somewhat rectangular transoms. The Eagle has a carved eagle figurehead, with trail boards and stern boards with carved detail.

The Eagle and the America were designed by Halsey Herreshoff. He is a naval architect and former president of the Herreshoff Museum in Bristol Rhode Island. He is the designer of dozens of contemporary production and custom boats. There is a lot of information about the Eagle and dozens of other Halsey Herreshoff designs online. Simply enter Herreshoff in the search engine of your choice and you will get a list of web sites with all manner of information about the Herreshoff's boats, museum, history and the like. There is also a very informative and enjoyable DVD of the Herreshoffs that can be found for sale on the museum's website and others.

The Eagle, to my eye, has a more appealing look (character) than a catboat, but I like catboats, too, as this was the boat design I was originally looking for. The Eagle has all the things I wanted in a catboat except for the simplicity of handling a single sail. And it was a great deal, even with the transportation.

Like the Beetle Cat auction I had won months earlier, I never thought I would win

The Eagle Has Landed!

By Greg Grundtisch



this one. Then the realization came that I not only won the auction, but I now own a boat and trailer. In Texas! OOPS! I then began to think a road trip from almost Canada to a warm climate on the Gulf coast of Texas for pickup was very desirable and soon to be in my future.

I was brought back to reality by my bride, the lovely and talented Naomi. "That's going to take at least five days!"

"So what," says I. "It is going to be a good way to get out of this deep freeze up here where the wind blows strong and the temperature hasn't hit double digits in over a month.

"But, you know I can't go," says she.

"Well, I'll just have to go myself," says I.

"Hell NO!" says she. "You're not leaving me here to shovel the driveway and suffer through those frozen zephyrs of this horrible winter by myself."

She then told me of uShip, the ones on that TV show "Shipping Wars." I was a little uncertain as those folks on the show are a bunch of bunglers and goofoffs. I would be concerned for the safety of my new vessel. Not to worry, says a boat counselor of mine.

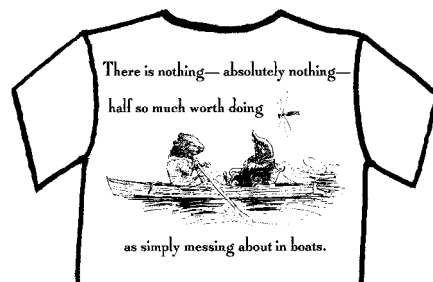


They show that stuff to make for television drama. It is a real transportation company and it is legit. The transporters with uShip bid on the move and you can choose which one you like to handle your boat. It turned out to be very good advice getting bids from this online transportation company. Finally, the "professional" boat transporter pirates of the past have some real good competition.

uShip is a very good alternative to the boat transporters who had somewhat of a chokehold on moving boats. What it has done is allowed for competitive bids that other transporters can see and adjust the rates to a more sensible fair market rate. You can also look through their feedback and read what the customers have said about the drivers and the transport companies. You will get a good idea of how your move will be handled, and by whom.

I received about ten bids for the move. I didn't use the cheapest, nor did I use the most expensive. I looked through the bids and found one that was a reasonable and sensible cost and a driver with top reviews. I chose Southwest Transportation with Mr Mike Dykes as the driver. He was personable, professional and experienced in moving boats, campers, trailers and such. He actually did an exceptional job under some very adverse weather and trailer related conditions at the time. He was on time as stated, good communication along the way and delivered as stated. I was fortunate to find such a professional driver.

So, be careful what you wish for, you may get it. In this situation it worked out quite well. We now have a boat that is ready to sail with minimum preparation, on a trailer that will save us on storage costs and can be moved around at little effort to the various lakes (Great and otherwise) around this area. Now we just have to wait until we have the discretionary time to do it. I wish.

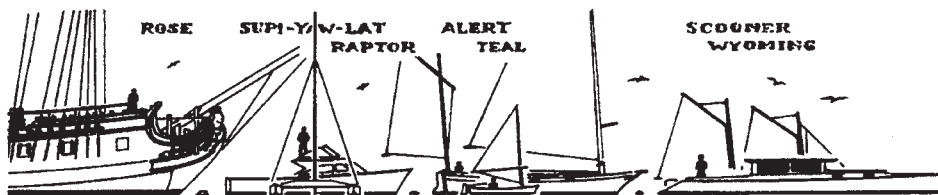


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This was hard to resist. Neill from Down Under sent late summer greetings from his 22' Motorsailer, *Merlin*, our Design #428, just at the tail end of a nasty winter here. A perfectly well timed reminder that indeed the boating season may yet come upon us up here in New England. We had just set a new snow record of over 108" here along the northeastern coast of Massachusetts, with most of that falling over a six to seven week window without much warmth to allow any melting between the various storms. For the first time in quite a few years the tidal creek some 100 yards away was frozen again with 8"-10" of iced up snow along with much larger chunks, making for an interesting spectacle across all sorts of light angles for the avid photographer, but thoroughly treacherous for even a most careful attempt at a passage. Even the Inner Harbor saw quite a bit of ice, slowing down further any remaining commercial activities.

Merlin had been built by the prolific Bruce Tyson of Tasmania and launched on December 23, 1998, as a perfect early summer Christmas present to himself, his family and friends. We had discussed the blessed event in *MAIB*, July 15, 1999, and August 1, 1999 (Vol 17 #5 and #6) and featured Tyson's report on her. And, of course, Phil had discussed her in his 1994 book *Boats With An Open Mind* in Chapter 36 as "Marina Cruiser."

On the occasion of some rather nice shots of her sailing, Phil wrote another *MAIB*

Phil Bolger & Friends on Design Another Look at *Merlin* Design #428

piece on her March 1, 2001 (Vol 18 #20) about "Bruce Tyson's masterly rendition of the concept." As Phil continued, "He named her *Merlin* and we intend to adopt that name for the design. The phrase 'Marina Cruiser' was unfortunate in a way as it suggested a lot less capability than the design actually delivers. There aren't many small power cruisers more capable on open water than this buoyant little boat. The design was aimed at people who enjoy their boats without feeling any need to perform exploits with them and who find pleasure in leisurely and sociable enjoyment of familiar places. By our observation such people outnumber those who want to go far or fast. The pity is that they usually don't realize that the boats they're offered are designed for the far and fast types who tend to be the ones who write the articles and reviews."

Neill, the new owner of *Merlin*, seems to be one of the types Phil was thinking of. As the photos document, she remains in premium condition, immaculate paint outside

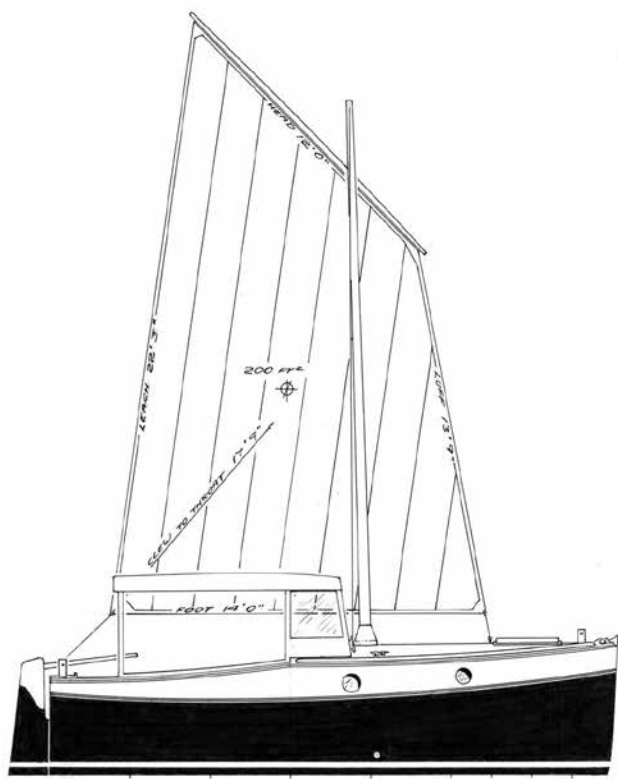
and a lot of varnish inside Neill did not send any shots of her under sail but there were two in the March 1, 2001, piece, clearly a must-read. Check with Bob, the editor, for copies of all three pieces! They won't set you back that much.

Now looking at that sail plan, one would be tempted to go beyond Phil's intense interest in dipping lug rigs and, say, add 2' to the mast it its base, keep that sail but add a boom to just clear the house top, and see how she'd like this treatment.

Here is how I put it to Neill, "The dipping lug is one major issue I've has serious disagreements with Phil for the reasons you touch upon. It was no better with the 930sf monster he had designed for a 50' motor sailer and which was indeed a handful even with four aboard in a fresh breeze. His fascination with this simple but practically very challenging geometry remains one of the few mysteries of his reasoning."

So, here is my response, Neill. I'd add 2+' to the mast it its base, keep that sail but add a boom to control that foot of the sail and just clear the house top, which turns everything into a much more docile, loose footed on boom balanced lug and see how you and *Merlin* like this treatment.

The addition to the mast heel has to be that length which is required to swing that boom across the house top with the current sail plan intact. Or you'd add the boom at the current





reef line for a simplest experiment. But you'd want the power without that reef. Either experimental way, I'd aim to cleat the yard hoist and the boom downhaul plus, if at all possible, the reef lines via cheek blocks on the boom and redirected downwards along the mast, to cleats just above deck level, where hopefully you can control all, raising yard, doing reefing, messing with the boom downhaul, etc, by standing in the companionway with the one or both front windows opened up to full 90°.

Adding to the current mast at the bottom may seem dramatic but might be little more than the equivalent of bracing that below deck section with a de facto below decks only tabernacle, just without it extending to above rooftop level never mind a pivot pin for folding the stick. That de facto tabernacle would be essentially half the section of the mast placed left and right between mast step and deck underside, between which you'd slide the mast during stepping.

The mast heel would slide down through the current deck hole between those tabernacle halves and end up sitting in a new but elevated mast step, essentially a short box the upper lip of which I'd brace transversely front and back with through bolted angle iron to control fore and aft movement of the heel.

In contrast to her fine finish, an initial temporary setup could be done fast and dirty (but clean wood!) to try out these better ergonomics for sailing. Either way this should be a fairly doable experiment to give a boomed sail a serious tryout without going for a new that much taller mast.

Living here, with a habit of wanting to fold masts to shoot bridges and go places where upright masts dare not, I might even

Engine room.



Interior looking amidships to starboard.



Cabin V berths.

Cabin entry looking forward to starboard.



keep that stick as is, add a full tabernacle with a 1" pivot pin just high enough over the roof top and trade for not having to build a new longer mast for the task of cutting a mast heel slot that runs into that fore hatch to gain that function, also handy in a gale on anchor,

requiring below or above decks a veeish brace to support the deck beam and that slot, with that brace running from the tabernacle legs forward to arrive at the after corners of the hatch coaming framing. Phil could actually not argue much about folding the stick. And he was used to my lower enthusiasm for the dipping lug.

After the initial experiment resulting in permanent improvements, she might become a rather civilized sailor after all, with you then ruminating which tack she prefers with that asymmetry, ever so well proven anyway in all sorts of craft. You'll watch for boom/yard to mast chafe and learn to use leather backed by neoprene under. Sail chafe may just require a lightweight rectangular wear strip (periodically replaced) running up the sail in way of contact with the mast.

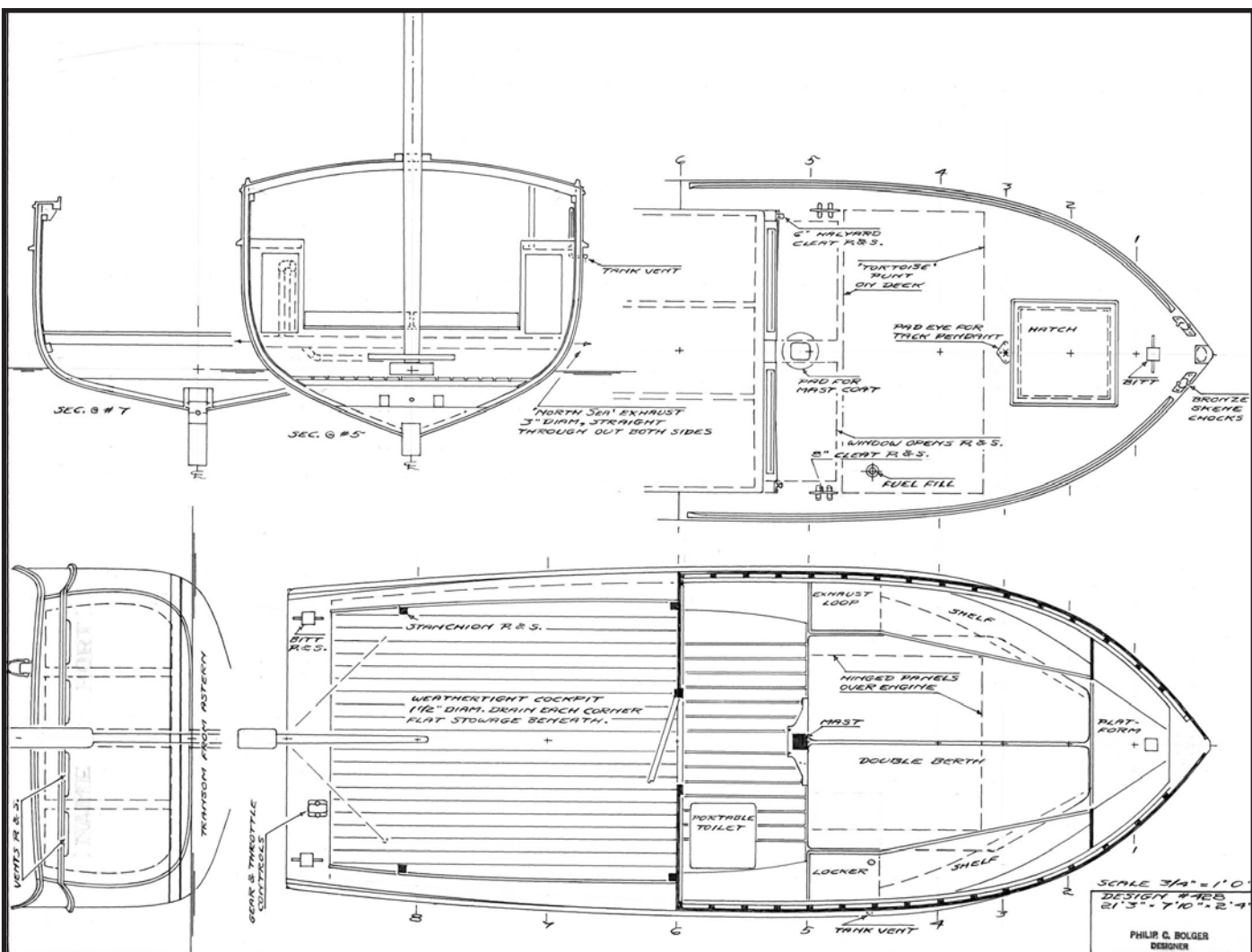
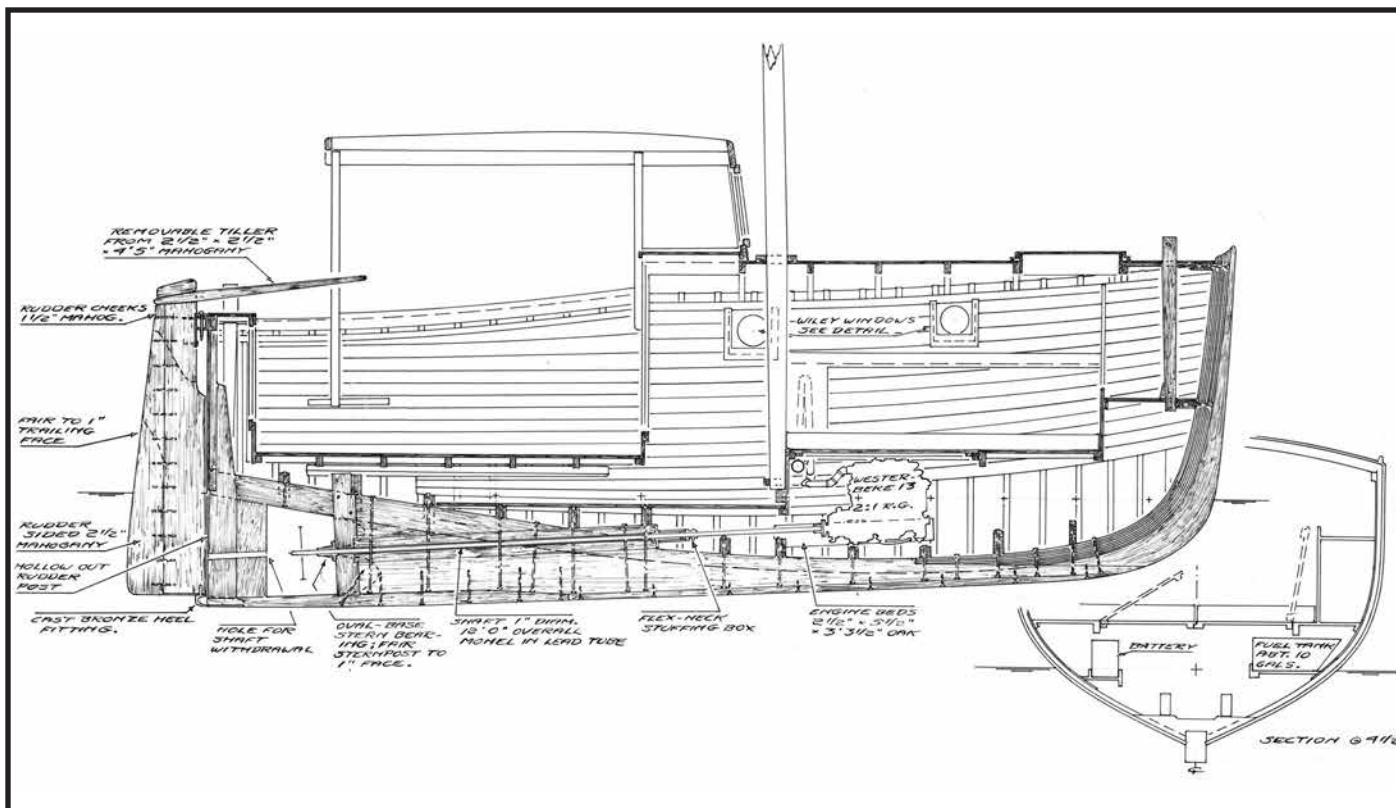
So perhaps no foredeck antics related to sailing, possibly a folding geometry for this well seasoned mast and no more war stories about wild attempts to subdue that unpredictable &@-ipping lug!" Now those are strong words there at the end.

At any rate, here an early reminder for us snowbound for too long, that whatever your ride, spring is indeed inevitable, rumored to be on its way as I write this in late March, never mind the meteorologists finger wagging with pious caution about the possibility of serious snow well into April. We'll see who will be the April's Fool this year. Of course, why Neill would be indicating a sheer endless summer, with even heat waves right now(!), may really need explaining while my freshly washed T shirts hang frozen on the clothesline. Yes, yes, someone indubitably will set me straight on this.

Next time, perhaps some boating, not ice breaking, boating. We'll see!

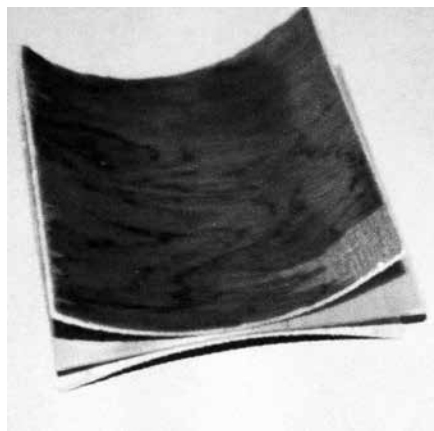
Hauled out.





In the fall of 2009 I started a new boat building project that would be made out of 1/4" plywood. One sheet of Okoume plywood costs about \$50 and I needed four sheets. I found this Meranti plywood at Home Depot for \$10 per sheet. Looked great and said it was exterior grade. It had three equal thickness plies with a paper thin veneer on each side.

I had read about a boil and freeze test for plywood in Sam Devlin's book on stitch and glue boat building, so I cut a 3" square and boiled it for 20 minutes and then put it in the freezer to freeze it solid. I did this for three cycles and it delaminated by peeling apart. I will not use it for a boat but it was worth a try to find out if it would work. I also did not like epoxy gluing to a paper thin veneer that could peel also. I would recommend staying away from this even though it is tempting. Epoxy is not a cure all for bad plywood.



I also tested a 3" square of Okoume plywood from 4'x8' panels that I purchased at Harbor Sales in Maryland (each sheet was \$50). I subjected this square to the boil and freeze test as I did with the cheap Meranti plywood from Home Depot. The Okoume survived three cycles of boiling for 20 minutes, then freezing solid overnight. It remained perfectly flat with no signs of delamination. It would have survived more cycles, too. I am glad that I decided to use it. It was more expensive, but well worth it.



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Boat Building Plywood

By Dave Robbie
Reprinted from *The Mainsheet*
Newsletter of the Delaware River
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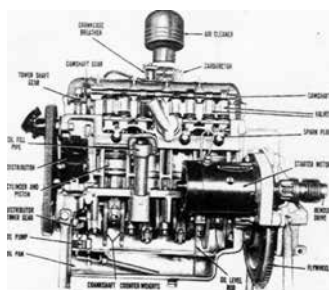
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Aerojet inboard engine advertising.



Cutway view of CIBA (Cast Iron Block) inboard Aerojet/Crosley.



Crosley inboard boat motor.

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The Crosley Aerojet Engine

Reprinted from *Bone Yard Boats*
www.boneyardboats.com

Cincinnati Reds owner Powell Crosley and his engineer brother Lewis began building sub compact cars at two assembly plants in Indiana in the late 1930s. Their first production model introduced in 1939 was a two door convertible selling for \$250. In subsequent years, additional models and body styles were introduced with superior gas mileage, some say up to 50 miles per gallon, being one of the car's strongest attributes.

Waukesha Engines of Wisconsin supplied Crosley with its Model 150 Cub Twin, a 35 cubic inch air cooled two cylinder engine, from 1939 to 1942. The Crosley factories ceased producing civilian vehicles during the WWII years and came back in 1946 making cars with the water cooled, 44 cubic inch four cylinder CoBra ("Copper Brazed") engine developed by Lloyd Taylor. This engine was made from sheet metal rather than cast iron. Corrosion proved to be the enemy of "The Might Tin," as the CoBra was also known and it was replaced in 1948 with the CIBA engine, or "Crosley Cast Iron Block Assembly." In mid 1952, with its best car sales years now in the rearview mirror, Crosley Motors ceased automobile production, the plant was acquired by General Tire and Rubber Company. However, production of the CIBA engine continued under the name Aerojet.

By 1954 Aerojet was selling a light-weight marine inboard version of the engine complete with vee drive, gauges, steering assembly, shaft, rudder and rudder mount and touting a 50% fuel savings vs comparable outboards. Production of the Aerojet engine ended in the 1950s, when Lou Fageol of Twin Coach Bus and Automobile Co of Kent, Ohio picked up the motor from General Tire and built it as the Fageol 44 boat motor. The first motors shipped as Fageol were just leftover AeroJet engines with a Fageol decal and possibly a Fageol intake manifold. This early four stroke outboard did not achieve enduring success or wide distribution. The Fageol 44 was sold in three performance forms, single carb, dual carb and supercharged. Mirror image blocks were cast to be used in the opposing, pancake design, to put the intake and exhaust ports on top of the engine.

The engine that started with Crosley cars ultimately ended up in the 1970s with Fisher-Pierce, known for the Bearcat 55 outboard motor, as well as Boston Whaler.

Fageol 44 V-Drive advertising.

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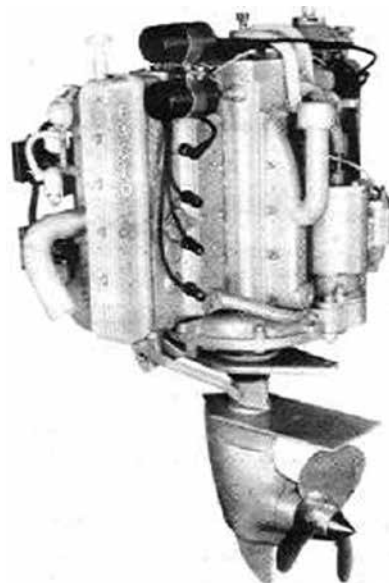


The Fageol 44 outboard hides its heritage well.



Fageol 44 V*I*P in a restored Yellow Jacket boat.

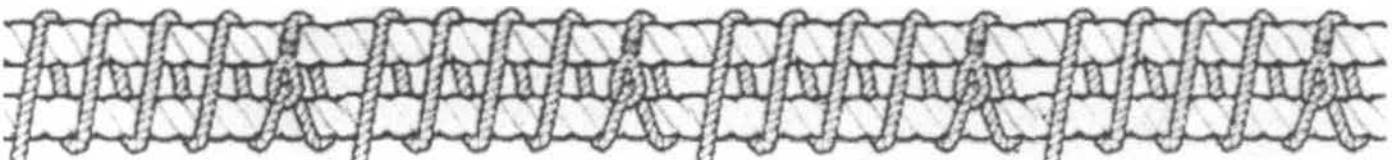
Fageol 88 Vertical Opposed 8, 80hp out of 88cu. in. Weight 295lb.



Mounster Steam Outboard Engine

Engineer Wally Mounster

	<p>Type/Format: twin cylinder double acting, vertical crankshaft</p> <p>Valving: 4 per cylinder poppet/ twin cam Inlet cut off at 54deg ATDC Exhaust closes at 90deg BTDC</p> <p>Engine Frame/Outboard Leg: 8 hp Mariner two stroke</p> <p>GearBox: 8 hp Mariner two stroke</p> <p>Output: circa 3 - 4 hp</p> <p>Weight: 33 kg</p>	<p>Explanations : Steam engine run much more slowly than IC engines so while it uses the same gearbox a larger propeller was required to match.</p> <p>Planned developments : Automatic stoker to feed the fire (unlikely to be finished by the time of the boat festival.)</p> <p>Fuel Consumption : 25 mm square hardwood garden stakes cut into 120mm lengths (Circa) 17 stakes / hour (10 kg per hour)</p> <p>Performance : Propels 13 foot dinghy at the hull speed. 4 knots</p> <p>Propeller : Bigger than standard 8 hp Mariner two stroke outboard</p> <p>Hull: "Diablito" which is Spanish for "Little Devil".</p>
Boiler	<p>30 metre of 6mm OD stainless steel tube, coiled frustrum shape (200mm base, 150mm blanked at the top) above the fire grate.</p> <p>The fire burns inside the coils pass through the spaces between the tubes before going up the outside to the flue.</p> <p>The boiler casing is 0.5 mm stainless steel, lined with "Fibrefrac" , a kaolin based insulation</p>	
Fire grate Features	<p>200 mm dia electric stove element</p> <p>Being so small it will raise steam from cold in a few minutes.</p> <p>Forced draft fan driven from the engine makes the fire burn very fiercely</p> <p>Two feed pumps (1:5 reduction toothed belt drive) which put water into the outer part of the tube coil, hand pump for filling the boiler before starting</p> <p>One vacuum pump (1:5 reduction toothed belt drive) which extracts the condensate from the condenser to the boiler feed pumps.</p> <p>One tiny lube oil pump down (100:1 geared reduction) feeding into the steam pipe to lubricate the piston rings.</p>	
Working pressure	200 psi up to 800 psi @400deg C	
Boiler Safety	no explosion risk as the volume is so small and the tube can withstand pressures up to 2000 psi.	
Condenser:	Copper tube guides the exhaust steam down the back of the outboard leg creates a vacuum making the engine more efficient and recycles the boiler water.	
Background:	<p>Steam powering an outboard is pretty unique and Wally is the current world expert. Check more details at the Steam Boat Association of Australia web site.</p> <p>There are others who have forged this unconventional marriage of technologies as documented in text at the WrenchTEN's eclectic site External combustion Engine Site (click on the text link for the text file)</p> <p>Steam Powered Outboard (YouTube overheating Mercury 150s?)</p> <p>Uniflow Steam Outboard (You Tube outboard engine on steam)</p>	



The sun rises in the geographical East and sets in the geographical West twice a year. This happens at the equinox that occurs around March 20 and September 22. The rest of the time the sun rises to the north or south of east depending on the season. The sun crosses the equator, moving northward at the March equinox and southward at the September equinox. I learned all this when I was studying celestial navigation. The correction for the sun when calculating my location on the globe was something I had not thought about before I started learning about celestial navigation. Thus, on a long voyage in open water, sailing toward the sunrise or the sunset may not quite get to the destination expected.

I subscribe to a number of boating related publications. Among these is *Maritime News*. This is a professional publication, usually devoted to commercial marine activities. However, in the February 2015 issue was an article on the rebuilding of PT Boat 305. What I found of possible interest to those of us working with small boats was the section on the use of a product called “Dolfinte” that was used in the original construction and was still in good condition many years later. An acquaintance who has worked with this product, says it is good stuff for its purpose, but that it sticks to everything (including you).

You have finished varnishing some wood and would like a nice “shine.” One method is to use the inside of a paper bag from the grocery store. For some reason, the paper used to make these bags produces a nice “shine” to the vanished wood with some light rubbing. Of course, you may have a problem finding the “old fashioned” paper bag that used to be standard at all grocery stores. I have a couple in storage that are about 10 years old just for this purpose.

The Spring 2015 issue of *Epoxyworks* had an interesting article starting on page 21



concerning various details in boat construction by Captain Watson that are worth taking the time to find a copy and read. One item covered is how to cut plastic water hose (to be placed over the gunwale) in a straight line by using a tube (larger diameter than the hose being cut) with a slit cut in the tube for a thin knife blade, razor knife, utility knife, whatever you have that is thin and cuts. The hose is pulled through the tube with the knife blade secured in the slit. The knife is held still while the hose moves. The tube protects from any accidental slices. The tube holding the knife should be secured firmly since there will be some force needed to pull the plastic water hose against the knife blade. I found this article of interest because I cut old water hose in a spiral for use as anti chafing protectors on my dock lines. Cutting heavy plastic hose in a spiral without cutting yourself in the process is a bit of a trick. Using the idea of a tube with a fixed knife blade, I can cut the hose in a spiral quite safely.

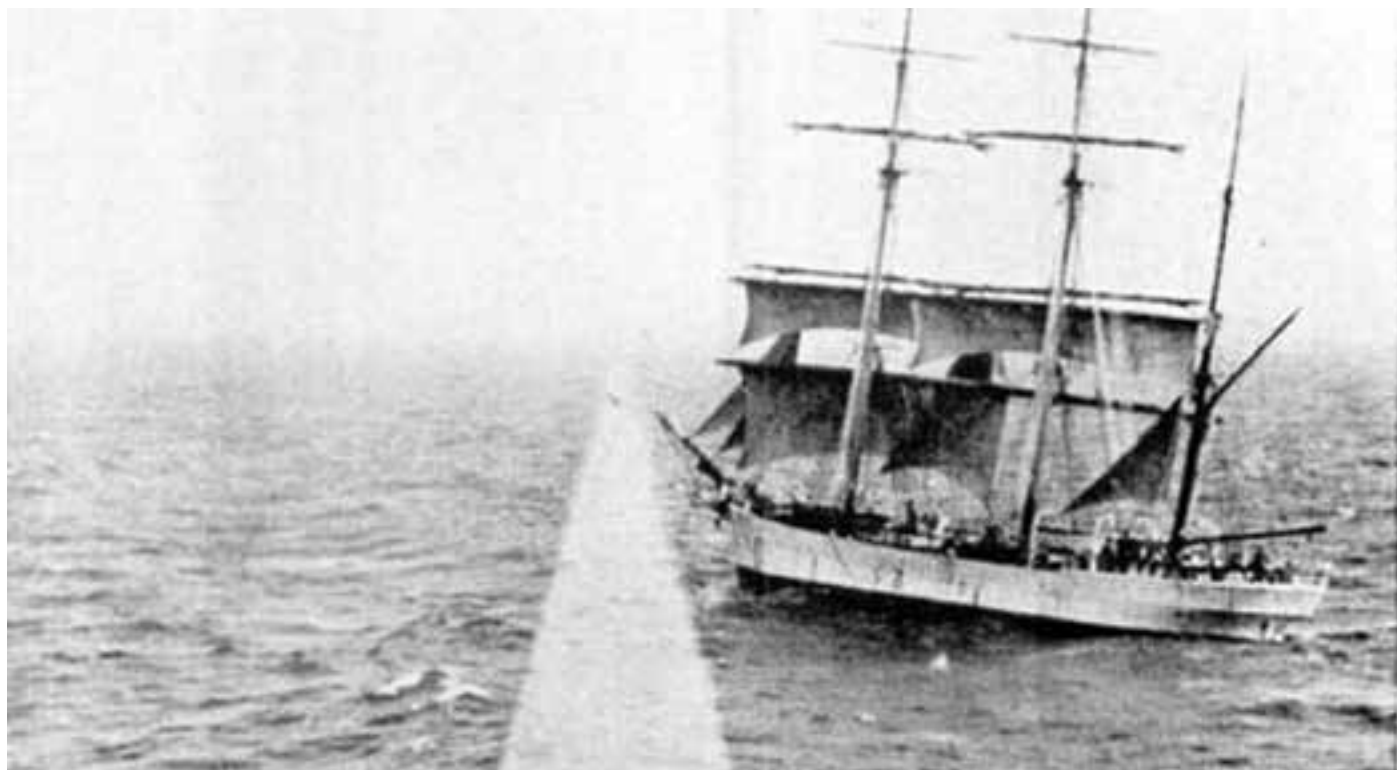
If you race your sailboat in local events, are you aware that you are “racing” once your fleet’s preparatory signal has been flown? Most people, unless they have been to a class on racing rules (and understand the material presented), are probably not aware of this fact. Many people think the “race” starts when their fleet’s start flag is raised, rather the preparatory flag. Depending on

the race instructions, there can be three to five minutes between the preparatory flag and the start flag for a fleet. However, during that time period, there is not a “proper course” that you must sail to the first mark until you have crossed the starting line and have “started” the race. If the above seems confusing, take the next racing rules course you can find.

I try on a regular basis to check all the various electronics on our boat at the dock. In our case, this is the VHF, GPS, running lights and the instrument panel gauges. If we are going out from the dock, the check list includes starting the engine, making sure the raw water overflow is putting the excess water over the side and going through the forward and reverse gears to make sure all is working (and the prop is not fouled).

The last time I went through the “at dock” check list the electric horn did not work. I checked all the connections as well as removing the push button switch for the horn for a separate check. All the connections were good but the horn was silent. I ran an “extension cord” from the battery directly to the horn’s wiring, to no avail. The next step was to remove the horn from the cabin top and cover the hole while I took the horn apart to see if the inside was corroded (this happens more than one would think in a salt spray environment). The horn is tilted slightly downward to encourage spray and rain water to not get into the inner workings of the horn. However, over time condensation does build up at the back of the horn housing. Such was the case with this horn. The “points” were corroded together (why steel contacts in a marine environment?). I cleaned things up, but could not get the horn to work. In the future, after I install the new horn, I will make sure I test it along with checking the other stuff on a periodic basis.

The equator was recently photographed for the first time in history. It turned out to be a broad white line which this schooner had difficulty in hurdling.



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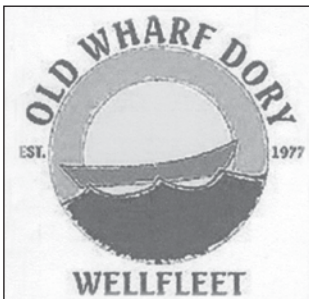
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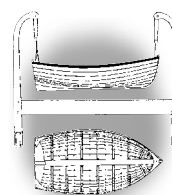
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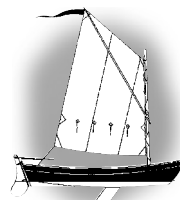
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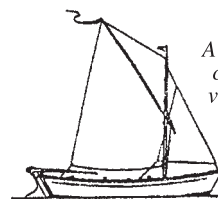


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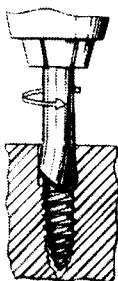
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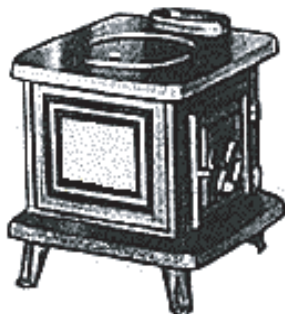
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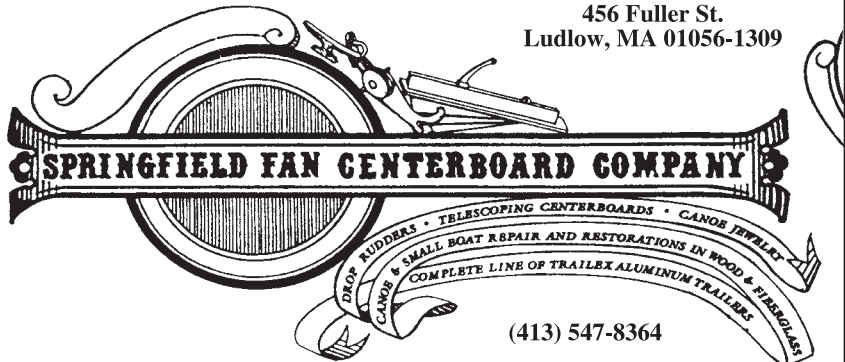
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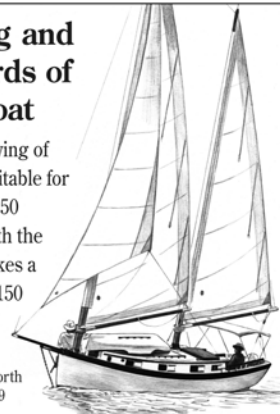


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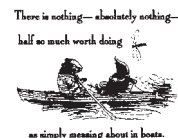
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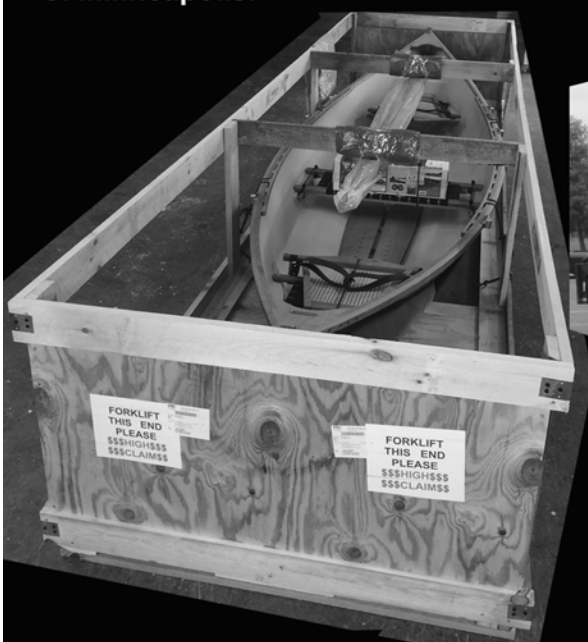
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